1: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1938 AV7 Burusho AV7

The Burusho of Hunza

by E. O. LORIMER

THE small state of Hunza is the most northerly in British India. It consists for the most part of a close-packed mass of unscaled and unscalable mountain peaks over 20,000 feet, seamed by untrodden rivers of snow and ice; as might be anticipated, it is mainly uninhabited. Its frontiers march with Afghanistan on the northwest and with Chinese Turkestan on the north and northeast. But where the Hunza river has cut its way down from the Pamirs to join the Gilgit river and ultimately the Indus, there remain, clinging to the mountain sides, a few sloping, rocky terraces which, if water can be brought to them, can with diligence be rendered fit for human habitation. These oases of green amidst the barren desolation of rock and cliff and mountain peak are the habitat of a sturdy mountain people, the Burusho, speaking a difficult but extremely interesting language, of so great antiquity that no affinity between it and any other known form of human speech has yet been traced by the comparative philologist.

When D.L. was posted as Political Agent, Gilgit (1920–24) he made it one of his leisure tasks to collect material for a scientific study of Burushaski (the language of the Burusho) the result of which is a three-volume work*—grammar, texts and vocabulary—of which the last volume is just issuing from the press. In 1934—ten years after his retirement—we returned unofficially to Hunza, armed indeed with a considerable knowledge of the language but with no facility in speaking it, to live amongst the peasants and make such a study of their customs, agriculture, economics, etc., as amateur anthropologists might.

During our four years in Gilgit we had not failed to discover that the Hunzukuts (dwellers in Hunza) were the most attractive of all the likable mountain peoples of the Gilgit Agency, the most physically prepossessing, the most intelligent and the most trustworthy. All classes in Hunza gave us a warm welcome, from the Mir—who has

* *The Burushaski Language*, by Lt.-Col. D. L. R. Lorimer, Oslo, 1935 (England: Williams and Norgate) published by the Norwegian Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture.

ANTIQUITY

[643] ruled his country in the humanest and wisest of benevolent autocracies, since the treaty of 1892 placed him on the throne of his murdered father 181 and parricide brother—to our humbler neighbours in Aliabad, the village four miles below the capital which we made our headquarters 609 for fifteen months. As soon as the people grasped the purpose of our [212] coming (which was not easy to explain to an illiterate people) they were overjoyed that a 'Sahib' should trouble to learn their vernacular—a thing which no white man or woman had done before—and take an interest in their customs and hereditary lore. At first they would hesitate: 'but you have wheels (=machines) in England, and can do all these things better than we can'. Within a few days they were vying with each other in explaining, demonstrating and bringing ploughs, looms, winnowing forks, bows, stone cooking pots to the resthouse where we were installed, that D.L. might measure them and take 'studio portraits' of them, 'for you mustn't put anything in the book about us that isn't exactly true'.

132 The entire life of the Hunzukuts is centred in water. The rain-
312 fall in the oasis level (7–9,000 feet), is negligible—we reckoned less
361 than 2 inches per annum; in default of any means of raising the water, the river, flowing between its crumbly earthen cliffs, 500 or 1,000 feet below their fields is useless for irrigation; there are no springs or wells; hence all water for all purposes must be trapped high up at the snout of some side glacier and conveyed on galleried aqueducts across yawning gorges and the faces of sheer cliffs. The main water channel, the Dala, which supplies all the more recent villages of Hunza, 'the new settlements' as they are called in contradistinction to the three original villages—Baltit the capital, Altit and Ganesh—travels some 8 or 10 miles in its circuitous route from the Herber glacier in the gorge behind Baltit, cradled between snow-peaks of 23,000 feet, before it peters out in a semicircular sweep round Aliabad.

312 The Dala was dug some three or four generations ago (90–100
412 years) with wooden shovels and wooden picks tipped with ibex horn, and represents an amazing feat of engineering skill for people without
816 any instruments of precision. The sluices that control the distribution of water—every teaspoonful of which is rigorously allotted—are of the simplest; most often a slab of flattish stone plastered in with mud, sometimes a wooden shutter sliding in a rude wooden frame, sometimes when the water is being taken off to a lower level a circular hole in a stone slab, closed at need with a mushroom-shaped stopper, rough hewn from a solid tree trunk.

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

Chapter 2

GILGIT APPRENTICESHIP

THERE followed four glorious years in Gilgit. The seven districts or provinces under David's supervision gave him plenty of official work and lots of incident, of which in another time and place I should love to write. One, the district of Chilas in the Indus Valley, was directly under a British Officer, Assistant to the Political Agent. Lying on the borders of the restless, untamed democracies of the independent territories of Darel and Tangir (casually lumped together in ordinary speech as Yághistan—"The Home of Rebels") it had, unlike the rest of the Agency, an unenviable record of serious crime, including from nine to fourteen murders a year. Gilgit itself was then administered by Kashmir officials with all the paraphernalia of Wazír-i-Wazárat, Revenue officers, and law-courts. With these two districts the Political Agent was less directly concerned, though his official headquarters were in Gilgit, the only really prosperous oasis of any size in the Agency. Then there were the four political *iláqas*, small states ruled by Government-appointed governors, Punial, Yasin, Kuh-Ghizr, and Ishkoman, and finally the two semi-independent kingdoms of Hunza and Nagir, with their own kings, or Mirs, hereditary chieftains whose families (or family, since the two Mirs are descended from a common ancestor) have held sway in their present territories for at least six hundred years, since the days of our earliest Edwards. Since the famous Hunza Nagir Campaign of 1891 the two Mirs have been our trusty and faithful allies.

It was David's job to be the friend and counsellor of governors and chiefs; to keep a sharp eye out for tyranny or oppression; to be at all times, whether at headquarters or on the road, immediately and easily accessible to humble folk with

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

346 outside the House of Assembly (the Maulai kind of meeting-house that has superseded the Shiah mosque). As we neared Aliábád, riding through rich, flat, large fields, and past walled orchards we heard the local band burst into the familiar "welcome music." Presently we came to an open steeply sloping space near the half-ruined Sarkari Fort, and here was a whole party from the capital (four miles away), including Prince Ghazan Khán, the eldest son, and heir of the Mir,[1] and father of the two young princes who had met us earlier. The band changed the time to the "arrival tune," and we all walked on together to this bungalow. We passed a smart set of new
758 little buildings which are the dispensary, built by the Mir.
743 There is a resident Assistant Surgeon here, an Indian with a certain amount of medical training, who is able to render first aid and keeps a stock of simple drugs.

000 We found chairs set out in the rest-house verandah, and while we and Ghazan Khán talked of old times and the latest Hunza news, the rest of our train grouped themselves on the steps, and all the small boys of Aliábád gathered under the trees along the neighbouring watercourse to see any fun that might be going: a jolly, cheery, intelligent crowd they looked, not a moron or cretin among them; again in a marked contrast to Nagir, where both abound. Presently a tray with teapot was brought, and we thankfully turned to the "doctor" (the aforementioned compounder) whose gift it was. Tea was what we were just dying for after the hot climb; but when I poured it out I found it was a tepid mixture of tea, milk, sugar—and cinnamon. David and Ghazan Khán dealt bravely with it; I unobtrusively hid my cup.

643 [1] He succeeded our good friend his father, Sir Muhammad Nazim Khán, in July 1938.

ILLNESS CALLS A HALT

175 Some time in the days of our earliest Edwards, a princess of
361 Baltistán married the reigning prince of Hunza. For the last
712 hundred years or so the direct route to Baltistán has been completely blocked by advancing glaciers, but for centuries before, the two countries had been in communication with each other. Hunza consisted then of three small villages only: Áltít and Ganesh on the river cliffs, and Báltít high above. The princess's father sent with the bride an army of Balti masons, carpenters, and craftsmen, who built the two forts of Áltít and Báltít as part of the royal dowry, and to-day they still stand proudly on their cliffs, impregnable to assault,
[177] centres of ancient ceremonial. To this day, too, the Hunzukuts modestly attribute all their simple arts to Balti influence.

173 The original inhabitants of Hunza proper are said to be
643 descended from three soldiers of Alexander the Great, who were left behind sick, presumably plus their womenfolk, and thus while their comrades marched on became the founders of the three first villages in this inhospitable region. Like so many royal houses in Central Asia, the family that has ruled for more than six centuries in Hunza and Nagir likes to claim descent from Alexander himself. But while the Mir of Nagir, Sir Sikander (= Alexander) Khan still upholds this tradition, we noticed that the shrewder Mir of Hunza—who must have seen many a courteously-veiled smile greet this familiar genealogy—shied off the topic.

What seems probable is that the royal family is not in origin of the same stock as the people, and that it may well—as tradition asserts—have come from Persia at some prehistoric date. What is certain is that it can trace its authentic ancestry as far back as can the House of Windsor.

173 There may well be truth in the legend of the European
144 descent of the Hunza Burusho, for in temperament and looks our Hunza friends have nothing of the "Oriental" about them. Take from them the very lightly bronzed complexion, "the shadow'd livery of the burnished sun," to which at this altitude they are "neighbour and near bred," and you could transplant them without incongruity to the moors of Yorkshire or the Scottish lowlands.

644 in winter. Rounding the last bend of the road, we saw before us, below the Fort, the park-like promontory on which the Mir has laid out royal gardens and orchards and built himself roomy summer quarters with two or three European guest-houses. As soon as we were sighted, the band broke out into the hospitable welcome music, and at the gate of the park a young prince stood to greet us, the loveliest boy of thirteen I have ever seen. He was Sháh Khán, one of the Mir's youngest sons, but I christened him forthwith Lord Fauntleroy. Short dark curls framed his homespun cap, and with him were two playmates armed with wooden rifles, whom he calls his "bodyguard." They laughingly presented arms in fine style, and we rode on through the trees to a row of hospitable mangers where we left our ponies and saw Prince Ghazan Khan (the "Prince of Wales"[1]) advancing on foot to meet us.

On our right we left the large open courtyard banked up on to the hillside with verandahs on two sides, where the Mir sits daily in public to dispense justice in the final court of appeal. A steep flight of irregular stone steps is fitted to the contour of the hill; above them on a large granite boulder is picturesquely and ingeniously perched one of the Mir's new guest-houses ornamented outside with ibex horns and stuffed game animals. Then the stairs turned abruptly left through a fine gateway of cut granite with two heraldic monsters couchant on the lintel, where the Mir himself was standing to await us.

● 643 Though nearly seventy, he was still a fine figure of a man, every inch a king, as befitted one of the few true, hereditary autocrats left in a topsy-turvy world. He led us through into a lovely English-looking orchard with apple trees bending laden boughs above the grass, to where carpets were spread on the turf beside a miniature playing fountain. A gaily decked tea-table had been set out. Our meeting was one of genuine happiness on both sides. He laughed as he shouted for the tea. "I haven't forgotten, Colonel Sahib," he said, "any hour of the day or night is tea-time, isn't it?" This dear old chestnut-

[1] Now the Mir, 1938.

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

ILLNESS CALLS A HALT

Joke recalled a journey he and David had made in company 643 twelve or thirteen years before to meet the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Rawlinson, on the Thui Pass as he entered Hunza from Chitral. Mir and Political Agent had messed together, and their shared passion for tea at any hour had strengthened the less frivolous bonds between them.

We noticed that our old friend was wearing coloured glasses and heard that his eyes were giving trouble. They looked as keen and shrewd and kindly as ever when he doffed his glasses, but he was awaiting an operation for cataract. It should have been performed in May, but Major Ledger, the Agency Surgeon, had himself gone down with typhus and was now recuperating in Kashmir, so the operation had been postponed until September. The Mir was also having to diet himself carefully to keep diabetes at bay, but despite these trifles he looked extremely well and very cheerful as he talked with expert knowledge of Central Asian politics and the tangled interactions of "Bolsheviki," Chinese, Turkis, and Tungins, and the mysterious disappearance into Russia of Ma Chung-yin.

We all enjoyed our tea, which was served by Mirza Hasan, a valued old retainer, sometime cook to a British officer, who is summoned to act as chef whenever European guests are expected. In the delightful informality of the Mir's intimate circle, Mirza Hasan stepped forward presently to welcome us and was gratified when I congratulated him on his cakes and biscuits (as I was conscientiously able to do). After a pleasant hour of interchanging news, we took our leave of the royal party, augmented meanwhile by the royal grandsons and a tiny son of two or three, and were seen out of the park with great solemnity by Lord Fauntleroy and bodyguard.

All initial duties were now performed and we could begin 000 our work in Aliábád in all seriousness. The Gods thought otherwise.

The ride home through noonday heat was hot and wearying; towards evening David felt feverish, before morning his temperature was close on 105°. There followed four anxious weeks. Five times his temperature ran up like this; five times after a spell of high fever it plunged down in five or six hours to 95°

2: Lorimer T-3 (1929-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

Chapter 17

LAND AND HOUSES IN HUNZA

423 By far the majority of the peasant families in Hunza are free-holders. The land passes from generation to generation without tax during life or duty after death. In olden days the Mirs owned a certain amount of land in every settlement, and the custom was to have this farmed by forced labour, spread, in theory, justly over the villagers. The Yerpa, or Steward, in charge of such royal demesnes, was obviously in the pleasant position of being able on the one side to cheat his royal master of a large proportion of the produce, and on the other to oppress and squeeze the luckless peasant-labourers. He extorted bribes in kind from anyone able thus to evade the communal work, and he could impose more than a fair share of the labour on anyone who incurred his dislike. When the present Mir (Sir Muhammad Nazim Khán)[1] was a boy he had seen this system at its ugly work under his father, Mir Ghazan Khan, and his elder brother, Mir Safdar Ali, and as he would tell you with a smile: "I knew just how much peculation and bribery went on—had I not acted as Yerpa myself!"

● 643 648 To secure the throne for himself, Safdar Ali, as may be remembered, murdered his father and several brothers in traditional Karakoram style, and ultimately fell foul of the British Government of India by breaking promises and treaties and trying to play off the Chinese and Russian Governments against the Indian. After the brilliant little frontier campaign of 1891–92 he fled—unregretted—to Central Asia, leaving vacant the throne of his ancestors. The British had no wish to annex the country, but it was highly important for the security

[1] Now, alas! the late Mir.—E. O. L., 1938.

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

of India that it should not be taken over by Russia. It was decided to put on the throne a younger brother of the fugitive Safdar Ali's—who by good luck had escaped murder. This young man, Muhammad Nazím Khán, had had an unusually wide political education. As a boy of only nine or ten he had been sent down by his father as a hostage to Gilgit, and had there met British officers for the first time and gained many new ideas. Later he had acted as ambassador and negotiator for his father and his brother on missions to Chinese Turkestan and Afghanistan, and he could talk Wakhi, Turki, Khowar, and Hindustani, as well as his own Burushaski. Above all, he was an extremely able youth, and had drawn his own deductions from his varied adventures. In 1892[1] he was therefore made king, with the able Humayun Beg as his Wazir, and since that time he has been our trusty and faithful ally, guarding for us the lofty passes that are the extreme northern gates to India on the west. For four and forty years he has now ruled his people with firmness, sympathy, and kindness, maintaining security, dispensing justice in accordance with local custom and public opinion, keeping up and encouraging the traditional festivals that punctuate the year with joust and dance, music and merriment.

During his reign there have been only two murders on Hunza soil, serious crime is unknown, and even theft and petty pilfering are non-existent, though there are in the country no prisons and no police. On rare occasions when some mischief-maker threatens serious trouble, the Mir, with the concurrence of his subjects, may deport the would-be disturber of the peace to the distant valleys of Shimshál to tend the royal flocks that pasture there or to spend his energy on roads or aqueducts. Food and pasturage are plentiful, and life in some respects more luxurious than in lower Hunza; but the Hunzukuts loves his home, his family, his apricots, and after a couple of years' exile the malcontent returns a wiser man. It is amusing to see a recent book indicting the Mir of Hunza for the "tyranny" that imposes so humane and so useful a punish-

[1] A popular account of these high matters may be found in Algernon Durand's *Making of a Frontier*, and in E. F. Knight's *Where Three Empires Meet*.

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920–4; 1934–5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

681 ment. A few years' exile in Shimshál is incomparably preferable to three years' penal servitude in Wormwood Scrubs, yet Hunza delinquents do not become recidivists.

● 643 423 Young Muhammad Nazím Khán took up his job determined, in the light of his travels and experience, to alter much that had been traditional under his ancestors, and within three years of his accession he had completely abolished the Yerpa system of cultivating the royal lands. Such as lay immediately under his own eye he retained, but all the rest are leased out on easy terms to tenants. For the first years a tenant pays no rent at all for new ground that he brings under the plough; he has to get his fields carved out, his water-channels made, and the soil worked. After the land begins to bear he pays a small fixed rent in kind, and if at any point he finds the bargain unprofitable he is free to resign his holding. A large part of the "new settlements" of Aliábád, including all the district immediately round our house, was *kutúkal* land (viz. royal land leased out), and there was no question that the system was working to everyone's satisfaction. The extra fields available had been eagerly taken up by families in the older settlements who were finding their freehold land too cramped, and many of our neighbours were sons who had hived off from the family freehold and whose relations were still living in Báltít, Haidarábád, or Dorkhan.

556 842 We once enquired, *à propos* of the meaning of the words "rich" and "poor": "Now what would you people consider a rich man?" "One who had, say, a hundred animals." (The ordinary peasant household has twenty or so sheep, goats, and cows.) "And is there any rich man in Aliábád?" "Only one, the Yerpa." This struck us as highly significant; the one rich man still bore by courtesy his grandfather's title of "Steward"! He was no doubt still enjoying his grandfather's ill-gotten gains. Our Yerpa was, in fact, a genial, kindly man, reputed generous. He was not envied: "Poor chap, he has no sons; he has to hire herd-boys to mind his flocks, and labourers to work his fields." In Hunza a man's true wealth is in his sons; they work the farm with him; if there are several, some can go abroad and earn. Not that a woman or a woman's work is

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AVT Burusho AVT

under-valued, but a boy will bring a wife to the house and children to the hearth, while a daughter will take her labour and her children to her husband's home.

In pre-British days the Hunza men bore a bad name in Central Asia as daring raiders. They are a hardy, fearless race, and they would strike a track through uninhabited and uninhabitable mountain country, leaving dumps of food at intervals as they went, fall on a rich caravan travelling from Leh to Yarqand, carry off the spoil, and return—via their food dumps—to divide the proceeds, the lion's share of which fell, of course, to their brigand chief. Any prisoners captured were sold as slaves into Afghanistan or Central Asia. Alternatively they would raid across the river into Nagir and come back with slaves and cattle.

Since such a form of life invites reprisals the Hunza people lived walled in in tight-packed villages close under their forts. We had in Aliábád the old fort-village, built on a promontory, with ravines protecting it on both sides, surrounded by a wall whose twelve beacon towers could send warning of a raid up and down the river—"and the red glare on Skiddaw roused the burghers of Carlisle." Only one of these beacon towers now remains and the crowded hovels are falling to decay. Since the *Pax Britannica* has come, the peasant builds his house and stores his crops out amongst his fields and orchards—without even a watchdog. A few conservative families move into their old "town house" in winter time perhaps for warmth and companionship, perhaps merely to make a change.

These famous raids were primarily the sport of chieftains, and the peasants of to-day find adventure enough, and danger enough, in their daily life not to regret them. The profits of such raids, which welcomely supplemented the scanty produce of the fields, are nowadays more than compensated by the money which the British put into circulation. The Mir draws a small and well-earned salary for his services as guardian of the frontier, a grant for keeping up the road through his territory, and a subsidy for his bodyguard of twenty-four men or so. Any sons the peasant can temporarily spare take service with the Gilgit Scouts, in the Public Works or other Govern-

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

have attributed it to the north-facing mountains which though richer in grass and timber are sorely stinted of the sun.

Whatever the difference is—racial, temperamental, religious, political, or climatic—it is too deep-seated to favour intermarriage. Only the royal houses, sprung from a common ancester—Alexander or another—frequently exchange princesses across the water.

Within Hunza the clans are all reckoned of equal status, but the clan of the Diramiting enjoys a considerable measure of prestige, and at communal ceremonies a Diramiting sets the pace or leads the dance. The story of their origin is interesting. There was once a clan of Tapkients who grew so bold and arrogant that their offences cried to heaven. They were reported to put bread to ignoble uses, they were known to address their mothers by the term *zizi*, which is the exclusive privilege of royal or saiyyid families, and they were haughty and stiff-necked towards their Mir. In vain the eldest royal son implored his father to "do something about it," and when the Mir refused to take suitable measures, the young prince impatiently laid his own schemes. A great gathering of all the clans was to be held on a nameless space of open desert where Altitbád now stands, and the Tapkients attended in full force. The prince plied them with strong *'araq*, and when they had well drunk fell upon them with his retainers and slew every man, boy, and male infant. He did not know that one of the Tapkients had allowed his wife to return to her own people for the birth of her first child. The posthumous infant was called Diram, and from him are sprung the Diramiting of to-day, who carry themselves without arrogance and do not call their mothers *zizi*.

Child marriages do not take place in Hunza, but a girl will rarely pass sixteen or a boy eighteen unwed. The parents seek out a house among some other clan—frequently a house with which marriage relationships already exist—where there is a potential mate of suitable age and standing, and negotiations proceed between the families. In theory the young folk are not consulted; but in practice, where children have romped and played and worked together there is no doubt that per-

Jx Lattimo T-3 (1929–4; 1934–5) 1939 AVT Burusho AVT

also 44a Record bridegroom's group come to dance Hop

535 585 were joined by a young princeling (a morganatic grandson of the Mir's) and a small friend of his, both in lovely silken gowns. They were a picturesque wee pair. The younger was about six, and his fond mother had got him up as a bridegroom, complete to the blackened eyes and fantastic dots on the cheek bones. The two boys polkaed round, stamping their bare feet and waving their tiny arms in perfect imitation of the grown-ups, and whenever they were in danger of being danced down, some kind hand would gently shove them to a safer place in the centre, where they went on gyrating. It was a jolly scene. Whenever there was room other small boys would join in, each normally venturing to do so only when his own clammen were dancing. Once or twice some little dare-devil would intrude into the wrong group, and another small boy would try to punch his head. At once good-humoured bystanders would collar the pair and dump them out of mischief at some distance from each other.

All the spectators were very merry in their orderly way, and there were bursts of applause at frequent intervals. No small share of the fun was contributed by the bandsmen, who varied the time and pace and worked the dancers up to a fine climax. The big drummer of Aliábéd is an old humorist called Húko. He waves his body and his arms about as he lustily attacks his drum and chaffs the dancers: "Go it, man! Leap, can't you, leap! Do you call that *dancing*? What are your legs for? Let your body swing, man! Get a move on there! Wave your arms, can't you? Oh, come alive!" etc., etc. The kettle-drummer flaunts his two sticks and wags his head, but being a younger and less privileged person than Húko does not venture on any verbal chaff. The poor piper who has mouth and hands glued to his funny-looking instrument that is half flute half trumpet just flings his body about and looks volumes. All three are so very much alive and on the spot that they imply that nothing else in life is quite such fun as playing while other men dance and marry. Their special efforts on such occasions are rewarded by extra gifts of bread, flour, and butter.

After about an hour and a half we came away, but for long after we could still hear the dance-music going on.

2: Lorimer T-8 (1920–4; 1934–5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

BARLEY SOWING AND "STARVATION SPRINGTIME"

and one carrying the Hunza standard (rather a new invention this, I fancy). The standard is a large triangle of white with two pairs of horizontal red stripes, an open hand in red, and a bow and arrow in green: a handsome and effective national flag.

After the standards came the men of the Royal Family, including Hari Tam of three or four (but not the new baby), the younger members leading the way, and lastly Sir Muhammad Nazim Khan himself, mounted on his snow-white Badakhshani stallion. The horse wore a scarlet saddle-cloth heavily embroidered in gold, and from a broad gold collar round its neck there dangled a large "feather brush" of pure white yak's hair. The Mir, looking as always every inch a king, was robed in bright green velvet cloak with massive padded gold embroidery. He had on a fine silk turban of pale blue. All the people entitled to a place in the procession, from the Mir downwards, were wearing bunches of large-leafed maidenhair in their caps. Gathering this fern, which as far as we could learn grows only in one spot in Hunza near Altit, and collecting the willows for the "horses" provide exciting tasks for the boys for a day or two preceding the feast, while women of the Diramiting clan are busy baking the barley mill-stones and compounding the *chapan*.

Before the procession ultimately emerges many elaborate traditional ceremonies take place in the ancient rooms of the Fort, which is still used for these occasions though no longer inhabited. The detail and significance of these ceremonies (which we were not invited to witness) were fully investigated by DL and I shall not here anticipate his account of them.

The procession passed along the narrow track till it reached the Bopfau field, 6 feet or so above the path and supported by the usual revetting wall. The younger and more active scaled the wall, but for the Mir himself a ladder had been placed at an angle of 45 degrees, bridging the water-channel at the base of the wall, and I followed the royal lead up the ladder. The Mir then took his seat on a chair beneath which a carpet had been spread (chair and carpet being doubtless modern

23 Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

in Hunza affect seclusion except the immediate royal family. 649
In addition to Qudrat's mother, a delightfully gracious woman, and his pretty young wife, we met Dádo's wife—also very pretty, but a shade more embarrassed. The families are in some way inter-related. We got some photos here, the outdoor setting being more favourable, but dare not linger lest the Mir should be waiting for us.

We had only just got planted on the grand stand by the polo- 796
ground when we saw his procession winding down the hill, 693 ●
the bodyguard in smart uniforms carrying the standard and the Mir with a white satin, gold-embroidered robe over his khaki, mounted on the Badakhshani stallion with the same handsome trappings as at the Bopfau. When he had taken his seat, up rushed a huge deputation from one village after another, shouting the equivalent of "O King, live for ever! May your New Year be blessed!" It was rather impressive. There was no mistaking the genuine affection and loyalty in voice and gesture.

After this followed the usual polo, archery, and dancing. Lord Fauntleroy again made excellent showing with his bow and arrow, and the youngest son of Ghazan Khan actually hit the mark, to his grandfather's pride and pleasure. The elder royal grandsons were not present; they were down in Gilgit doing their Scouts' training. We left about four, but the Mir settled down to see the daylight out at the sports and to preside at another bigger feed to The Great of the land. He was an amazing man for nearly seventy, and apparently entered into these shows with as much zest as the people themselves.

2: Lorimer T-8 (1929–4; 1934–5) 1939 AVT Burusho AVT

the ruins, but the manuscripts threw no light on the matter. So far as they have yet been examined they appear to be comparatively commonplace copies of already well-known sacred writings of latish date. They are now lodged in the Srinagar Museum, which is permanently closed.

Our return to Gilgit coincided (somewhat unfortunately we ungraciously felt) with the Jubilee celebrations and perforce we spent another very pleasant (but time-wasting) holiday with our most hospitable friends the Kirkbrides. It was May 13th before we were able to disentangle ourselves from Gilgit and its seductions and set our faces once more towards Hunza. The very horses seemed to scent that they were heading home and gave us of their best. The weather was now very definitely warming up, and we marched early to avoid the greater heat. Nomal and Chalt provided us as usual with loathsome milk tasting of Tom Cat. This indescribably vile flavour is due to some wild herb that grows in these neighbourhoods at certain seasons. I am not botanist enough to know its name, and it is not a plant of which I covet seeds or slips. It is mercifully unknown in Hunza.

As we rode through the rich, well-watered string of Nagir villages we were escorted for part of the way by various Nagir princes sent by their father to show us courtesy. Green crops, shady walnut trees and masses of blue iris and wild rose made the road enchanting, its loveliness enhanced a thousandfold by the bleakness and barrenness of the great mountains. I confess I always covet these lovely villages for Hunza, the more so that the Nagirkuts are far more slack and slovenly in their cultivation than "our" people. All the irrigation water, coming straight from the melting glaciers of Rakaposhi, was now milky and unappetizing. The Nagir people, though not actively uncivil, never volunteer a greeting as you pass and never throw you a kindly smile even when they speak. We noticed, too—and how it shocked our loyal Hunza folk—that the Nagir princes also were allowed to ride past unsaluted and apparently unregarded. The Mir of Nagir had been pressing in invitations to us to visit him—as soon as he had convinced himself that no great harm seemed to be accruing to Hunza from our presence there.

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

shingát breeds caution, not contempt. As we rode in we saw Ali Ausat at the nicely carved door of his house, rather grubby but pleased to see us, passed the miserable apology for a hospital which contrasts ill with the well-built one at Alíábád, though the two Mirs got the same grant from Government for the purpose of building them, and on past a fine, large, shallow pond. On our right was a steep green slope with jolly poplars and a lot of grass, and then we reached the polo-ground. Here the Mir came himself to meet us from the shelter of a roofed summer-house where he had been waiting. Another mile of almost perpendicular zigzag, which the ponies could only just manage, brought us to the familiar old polo-ground (now disused for play), with its lovely double line of poplars. This peculiarly steep and horrible approach is new, and the Mir is very proud of it. From the top there is a magnificent view with the pond below looking like a lake and the Mir's palace picturesquely perched on a steep hill-face with fine windows looking out not at any view but straight into the terraced hillside opposite. Mir Sikandar Khan looked shrunken and frail compared with ten years ago, but very brisk, and was apparently able to ride up his new road without a qualm.

He himself received us most hospitably and kindly, but his people serve him ill. Immediately on our arrival a shindy broke out with talk of grass- and fodder-shortage, though grass and fodder are plentiful in Nagir, and we found the rest-house dirty and unswept, bathroom and utensils uncared for, and a general atmosphere of grudging incompetence pervading it.

We dined with the Mir that evening and duly entertained him in return, while I paid a visit to the ladies and met the numerous little princes and princesses. The Queen of Nagir, a fine, handsome woman, not a day older than when I had last seen her eleven years ago, is a sister of Khan Sahib Mir Baz Khan of Yasin, and I was able to bring her first-hand news of her brother and his family, in which it is fair to say she did not seem over-interested. But she is a gracious motherly woman, and very intelligent—she even followed my Burushaski (Hunza variety) with ease. The brightest moments of my call were

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Buruho AV7

643 provided by the charming little prince, Shaukat Ali, son of the Mir's eldest son, who unhappily died young during our time in Gilgit. The boy is therefore his grandfather's next heir. He is a most intelligent, well-mannered lad, and manfully upheld the conversation whenever it threatened to flag.

Two of the royal ladies were Hunza princesses married across the border, one a daughter, one a granddaughter of the Mir.

In his day the Mir of Nagir was a mighty hunter before the Lord, and one of the best polo players in the Agency. He told us he had shot three thousand head of big game in his life. He has now been forbidden by the doctors to attempt over-strenuous physical feats, and indeed it is obvious that he would no longer be able for them, but he still has the regal carriage of younger days. His sons used to tell us that they dreaded hunting expeditions with their father because he appeared impervious to fatigue, and quite indifferent to such trifles as food or sleep. His reception-room is hung with lordly trophies of the chase: local ibex, markhor, and several magnificent heads of *bara singh* bagged in Kashmir.

He is justifiably proud that his six sons form a polo-team equal to any other in the Agency.

We had feared that decency would compel us to spend at least three days in Nagir, but since *one* day easily exhausted all our conversational resources—the Mir has nothing like the wide range of interests nor the intellectual curiosity that distinguished his Hunza colleague—and since his ungracious underlings raised one difficulty after another about supplying our very modest needs (we had sent straight through to Hunza all our spare kit and animals so as not to impose any avoidable burden) though offered as of course more than adequate payment, we decided to curtail our visit and the Mir greeted our decision with unconcealed relief, though he "only wished we could stay a year." So the 18th saw us pack up and thankfully make our escape.

000 We had not been reckoning on any language work in Nagir, for we had secured as much material as we could hope for from Ali Ausat during our time in Yasin, so we lost nothing of that sort by cutting short our Nagir visit. We gained one valu-

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

487 fort. When you reach the courtyard the Fort towers above you like Bush House. Up the semi-spiral ramp outside and the two flights of ladder-like stairs, and out you come on to the great reception balcony with its incomparable view. The country looks its very best in July, every field green or golden with its crops and every fruit tree in full luxuriant leaf, apricots turning golden but not yet ripe.

600 There was a crowd of fifty or sixty on the balcony, and we chatted to the princes and others while DL endeavoured to find some spot from which he could command with his cine-camera the steep approach almost vertically below us up which the Harvest procession would presently be coming, without himself toppling over to certain death. The little parapet—not calculated for the convenience of camera men—just caught his shins in such a way as to encourage a fatal plunge. It is needless to mention that the sinking sun stared straight into his lens. The sun blazed relentlessly on the white mud floor of the balcony, the resultant glare alternating with inky shadows, while the table and chairs which had been hospitably provided for our convenience intruded with infernal incongruity into every foreground. If you escaped sudden death over the parapet to rocks 1,000 feet below, you might meet a less spectacular but equally fatal end by an unpremeditated dive down the trap-door. Photography in Hunza is fraught with danger and difficulty.

643 The Mir meantime had disappeared inside to robe himself before taking his seat on the throne under the carved verandah, where he would be well-nigh invisible to the camera lens. The cloth spread on the throne was the loveliest imaginable: a thick, bright sapphire-blue velvet with a border of apricot colour, or rather that delicate, yellowy, salmony pink which upholsterers call "apricot," though never was an apricot that shade. The whole border as well as a great medallion in the centre was embroidered in real gold, padded quarter of an inch thick: a barbarically lovely thing, bought, the Mir said, for Lord Curzon's visit twenty or thirty years ago, and as untarnished still as only real gold can be.

At last, when we were nearly grilled to death, we heard a

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

shout of "Here they come!" Far away, hundreds of feet below 643
us, we could just descry a pair of horsemen scrambling up the road I have described. It was two of the royal princes, one of them Lord Fauntleroy, each with an armful of ripe golden barley. Soon they disappeared into the bowels of the Fort below us and presently their heads popped up through the trap-door. Someone whisked the barley from their arms and disappeared with it to rub the ears and toast the grains. The Mir appeared from an inner door. He was wearing a loose gown of pale blue silk all embroidered in gold and a pale turban also touched with gold. He greeted his people like a king and went over to his seat, quietly kicked off his slippers, and neatly slithered himself on to the couch-like throne in photograph-defying shadow, and sat cross-legged—the perfect picture of an Oriental monarch whose authentic ancestors were ruling Hunza while our Black Prince was fighting in the fields of France. He graciously signed for us to come near, and I let my chair be brought under the verandah, but DL begged to be allowed to stay out in the balcony where he could move about more freely.

Then came a henchman with ewer and basin and the Mir 241
very sensibly spread a towel over his silken knees and velvet cloth while water was poured over his hands. Another minion then presented a priceless china bowl filled with sour milk, and the Mir taking a silver spoon lifted half a spoonful of the junket and held it out while the man sprinkled in three grains of toasted barley. This he ate—three times three grains in all—thus handselling the first fruits of the year's new harvest. Then the bowl was circulated to DL (with a fresh spoon) and then to me, and then in order of rank and precedence to the rest of the assembled company. It was a simple yet impressive little communion service. And throughout the country every family in like fashion ceremonially tastes the first grains of the new barley, and carries in the first-cut stalks solemnly to bind them round the *shiri dako*, the main pillar of the humble atrium, where they remain till in due course replaced a twelve-month later.

When the bowl and barley grains had made the rounds, in

3t Lorimer 1-3 (1939-4; 1934-8) 1935 AVT Burusho AVT

6. Bëricho — now of two classes:
   i. ġherasho bëricho — musicians who provide music on all public occasions.
   ii. ḍak ċtasho bëricho — blacksmiths.[1]

The functions of the Bericho are undergoing a process of extension. They now fetch firewood for the Tham and thorns for protecting enclosures. They also do plastering work for him. A few serve as sweepers. Their status is said to be rising. The Burusho will now eat food prepared by them, which they would not formerly do.

In both Hunza and Nagir the supreme power resides in an autocracy exercised by the Tham, or Mir. The two royal families derive from a common source and are inter-related by subsequent marriages. This joint royal family claims to have come from Baltistan and to have been established in Hunza and Nagir for the last six hundred years.

Each village group is an administrative unit and the Tham is represented in it by one to three Uyõngko (Uyũmko) or Trangfiting (sg. a uyũm — *govt.* trangfa). Under their direction these officials have Cherbuting (sg. cherbe, ċerbe) who transmit orders to the public. Where the Tham owns land he has a steward, or personal representative, called a Yarpa, who again has subordinates under him to supervise the division of the water-supply.

For the settlement of cases and disputes of all kinds there is in Hunza a long progressive series of "courts", if one may use the term. First the case is dealt with by the heads of the two houses and the two families in conclave. Failing settlement it is referred to the Headmen of the community (girũmé uyũm; girams uyums). Thirdly: again failing settlement, it is referred to the Headmen of the Four Clans (wälto girãmichingé uyõngko; walto girãmiting uyoṇko) who proceed to the "gate" of the Khan and adjudicate on it.

[1] The following are the phonetic renderings of the Burushaski words in the above paragraphs: 1. Thams; kərrõ; ary'ɑmkus; 2. uyoṇko or uyoṇmko; shəbirig; wasiv; trangfa; yarpa; farəŋ; 3. hasa ste; 4. ġaŋkuro; 5. haldakuyo; tsilgotsilo; 6. berilo; uyoṇsõ ḍak ċtasho.

4: Lorimer L-3 (1920-4; 1934-8) 1935 AVT Burushо AVT

(or, i-ti) du-simi. Du-sin i-mo yuyu bukai.er e-pi kai.i yakalater niti
kr Si-ŋ guça bam, xoer iter juŋilum. Lel etimi guça kai.i. Asi-ter
ni-ti kr ilčumute rat bim, ni-min eyenumatr Si-ŋ kaš etimi. Kaš
nr yatie teir pfat nr day-asmi.

Day-ai.aser Si-ŋr yastaero da ha jama-at xaber um-anuman. Barei-
man kr Si-ŋ mezniko kaš eta-n. Hindi.r aistar jo-niŋ (or, šo-niŋ)
etuman. Etaser uyo-n hera-n umanuman: "Kin menr kaš eta-n?"
nusem. Terumaner Si-ŋr Daltar Manu-ku.r i- du-simi. Du-sin esnimi:
"Sr manataero (or, antentaero), da-do ja kaš eta ba. Ja altan
ar.utaero o-eqanam. Ja ar.u Daltar Manu-ko eqanar ya-rum nukar-tain
Pisaner du-sam. Te-ir ja mama numu-teum je damana baiyam. Ja ar.u
Pisankutar eqanuman. Je mu-to da-n Si-ŋ e-eqanam, be-er kr Si-ŋr
na-haq i-mo yu- o-eqanam. I-tr ma-rulo ja e-eqanam," o-simi.

Noeun Hindilo Si-ŋr ditulo u-urutin uyu-mkuš ne huru-timi.

Yar e-pi.r iski-čuk bay yai.iŋr dor-er nikin i-tr hisa-patr teilr galt
traŋ o-tam. Kin Si-ŋr Daltar Manu-ku.r i-r et fat nr sa hisab nr
teilr galt traŋ o-timi. Mu-to xa-tiŋer i-mr i-tr hisa-batr sa traŋ nr
teilr galt yu-lja-n.

Kinr Si-ŋ Hamaču-tiŋr qaumteum bam seiba-n. Ki-nr Si-ŋr Daltar
Manu-ku.r i-i waxtulo Hunzamo Thamo Hindi.er ho-l u-uyen du-nin
Hindi gana-n. Da Si-ŋr Daltar Manu-ko.r i- eqana-n, seiba-n.

---

1 *kaš etimi* — *kaš* is used ordinarily of slaughtering animals and probably implies cutting the throat and cutting off the head, hence the statement that he left the head behind.

6 *šo-niŋ* — was originally preceded by *utsi* referring to the unknown murderers: 'they reviled them'.

10–11 *yar e-pi.r . . . pu-jer-n* — cp. p. 262 l. 4. Again it seems impossible to give an exact translation and explanation of the water-system. The new system was based on the sa; and sa means 'sun', 'sunlight', 'daylight', 'day'. I have a note that it was "on the basis of days". The word -ar 'month' may be ruled out.

I am suspicious of the phrase *teilr galt pu-jer-n*. The ordinary phrase is *teil galar*. Perhaps *nr* should be supplied after *galt*.

12 *Hunzamo Thamo* — These Thams are said to have been a dynasty preceding the present one, which was initiated by Girkin, a great-great-grandson of Azur Jamshed. This earlier dynasty is said to have been of Persian origin and to have died out.

173
643

4a Lorimer L-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1935 AV7 Buruaho AV7

Then they grind the *manottèi* (flour) for the wedding — for the *Akanuli* separately, for the *sherbat* separately, for the *girda* separately. He grinds two *talichuge* (= 336 lbs.) for the *Akanuli* and five *chuge* (= 120 lbs.) for the *sherbat*, for the Bride's party and the tribal brethren of the Bridegroom. Then having made the (mullahs) look out an auspicious hour they put on the griddle. And they bring in the (female) relations and get them to bake the *Akanuli* for two days, and one day they make them bake the *girda*, and then they cook the meat. They slaughter four or five goats and they cook the *sherbat*.

Then they make the Bridegroom dress up and put on a cotton over-shirt and don a turban and carry a dagger. A man who has been once married helps him to dress up, and they make him take in his hand the ceremonial axe. Then he assembles his tribal brethren at the house and makes them drink wine and gives them bread, and they fetch the musicians and sing and amuse themselves (hold festival). Then they put white and blue spots round the Bridegroom's eyes.

When some time remains to sunset on the day ordained by the Tham they bring out all the bridegrooms to the public assembly. It is the custom from ancient times that they bring out the Dirámiting bridegrooms first to the assembly before all the rest.

Both Bride and Groom have an ornament suspended at the cheek — the *gave majok* "marriage tassel" — which consists of a tassel with a pearl or piece of coral strung above it and above that a piece of mother-of-pearl.

The Bride's adorning is mentioned again on p. 304 l. 11.

9 *ɣaɣiq* — the songs are in Shina.

10 *Sikmats* — *sik-s* must be the genitive of *sik* 'indigo'.

A note says that white, red and blue spots are put round the sockets of the eyes, the object being to make the man look ugly and so protect him from the Evil Eye.

gavawi — originally written *gavawa*. I am not clear what it means here.

11 *gavawi* — is here and on p. 302 l. 2 used as the plural of *gavawa*, 'bride groom'.

12 *ile gwatsolo* — cp. note to line 2. The Tham fixes a day on which all marriages must be celebrated, or two days if there are many.

13 *mavak'aw* — this is in front of the Fort at Bálti.

4: Lorimer 1-3 (1930-4; 1934-5) 1935 AV7 Burushо AV7

No. XL.

The Custom in regard to The Tham's Annual Visit to Hèrber.

Every Autumn, in September or October, or on the 15th. or 20th. of Sambula, the Tham sets out for Hèrber taking with him eighty followers and Elders. With ten or fifteen Elders, fifteen men of superior rank, twenty minor servants, seven or eight huntsmen, eight bandsmen and four grooms, thus he sets out.

It is the custom for the Elders of Galmit and, in addition, a number of young men, to come as far as Chaman Gul to receive the Tham. Slaying a goat and loading it along with a supply of bread in a panier they bring it to Bulchi Dua for his reception. It is called *Otag*. Then the Tham stops there and eats it. When he has eaten and has gone on to Chacha Hera the women come out on to the edge of the terrace and wave their hands round in the Tham's honour.

(Proceeding) thence they keep playing music in front of the Tham (until) he dismounts at the Galmit dancing place. When the Tham has dismounted they present an ox before him. In former times it was the custom for the Tham to give orders to a distinguished Elder, upon which the latter, they say, seizing the ox and pulling

---

31 *tailatera* — probably from *tela* 'there' and not from *tail* etc. 'such'. There seems to be a verb or two missing in this sentence: the party proceeds, music being played in front of the Tham until the Galmit dancing ground is reached, when the Tham dismounts.

31 *de.idera* — "they make an ox stand", "they stand up an ox", or "they keep an ox standing for the Tham", a sort of technical expression for presentation.

4: Lorimer L-3 (1929–4; 1934–5) 1935 AV7 Burusho AV7

it backwards smote it with his sword straight down the front line of the (shoulder and) forelegs. Now the present Tham has made them give up this practice. (As) for laying hold of the ox, they still lay hold of it. 539A 643 574

Then when the Tham, having dismounted, has taken his seat on the platform at the dancing ground, they bring a small bowl of milk to him. The Tham, saying "Bismillah," drinks a little and enquires of the Headmen: "Are you well?" and they, standing up, reply to the Tham: "You are welcome."

Then the Tham goes into the fort and the servants and elders go off to their respective lodgings. When they have done so the Wakhis bring them *Kursūṭ Dasdas* (a form of food).

Then on the evening of the same day the Headman kills two goats at his house, and then cutting up a lump of ghee, which may be 30 lbs. in weight, he makes *sherbat*. Then, having prepared 15 *chaqs* of wheat bread he conducts the Tham, accompanied by his followers, to his house.

There are two Hunza Trangfas and they go and cut up the bread and meat and prepare the dishes of food. They roast the breast of the one he-goat for the Tham and bring it to the place of assembly, and they convey the breast of the other to the Tham's consort. The kidneys they take to the senior Gushpūr if there is any. One liver they give to the Wazir, if he is there, or, if he has not come, to one of his brothers or his son.

When the Tham goes to the house and when he has arrived at

---

4 *ḫaro ḫarwa?* — said in Wakhi which is said to be "*ḫaʃlirpa?*" i. e. *ḫaʃ*, 'good'; *irri*, 'are'; *a*, interrog. particle.

The equivalent Wakhi for the Persian *Xuš amadi* was given as *ḫaker wi.ce*.

6 *ḫarqar* — The Tham's official residence. It is scarcely a 'fort' and certainly not a 'palace' in the ordinary acceptance of the term.

9 *qoiiqar* — Shaw gives Wakhi *qoi* as "household, quarters, camp". It is also used in Sh. and Kho. It is here glossed 'inhabited house', but seems to mean "lodgings".

11 *wiker* — past participle active of **-zəwar.*

14 *ḫeṛy* — i. e. *ḫaq* refers I think only to the meat, cp. l. 12, page 340 below. It was glossed "cutting up".

15 *ḫaskərair* — usually 'ram'; here glossed 'male goat'.

19 *dəyoʌqo* — a note adds that the Tham puts a little flour on his head.

4: Lorimer 1-3 (1928–4; 1934–5) 1935 AVT Burushо AVT

the door, they bring out a bowl of flour, and *ispandur* smoke, and a dish of ghee. The Tham touching these and kissing (his fingers) enters the house and sits down on the large dais. The master of the house and his brothers, standing in the centre part of the room, say: "You are welcome!" "God bless you!" replies the Tham.

Then he makes the Elders and followers sit down for a little at the door and he calls up the Wastr and then he calls up the Yerpa. Then they bring the Elders one by one into the house, and then they bring in the inferior followers, and they make them sit down in their appointed places. After this a personal servant brings water for the Tham to wash his hands, and when they have made the Tham wash his hands they make the Elders wash theirs.

Then they set food before the Tham. The Head Cook and the assistant cooks prepare vegetable soup for the Tham and put the hindquarters of a sheep and *sherbat* with bread before him. Also four cakes of thick bread, and curds in a bowl, and cream in a cup. The Head Cook cuts up the meat for the Tham.

Then they place dishes of food before the leading men, and the meat that is in front of the Tham they dispense to the Elders and followers. There are also the two heads of the goats: one of these with some bread they give to the musicians; the other they give to the grooms. To the huntsmen they give the fat tail (of the sheep) which is in front of the Mir. They give two dishes (of food) to each party separately. To the Bodyguard they give five dishes.

Then to the Tham's womenfolk also they send bread and dishes of food and to the Gushpurs they send one dish each. The Gushpurs are not allowed to come to the host's house with the Tham and Elders. They send the food for them to their various lodgings.

When he has eaten the Tham comes out. He says: "Blessings on you!" and they reply: "On your life blessings!" The master of the house comes out in front of the door with the Tham.

---

22 *kavlow .. kanik ki* — the sentence is grammatically obscure and probably faulty, *kavlow* unless it is adjectival, seems to require a verb, such as "they carry away from ...".
wasivrhi — an alternative reading is: *wasirw kan ...*
arpilas — is the p.pe. active of *bilujas* used absolutely.

4c Lorimer I-3 (1929-4; 1934-8) 1936 AVT Burushō AVT

Then from the house of entertainment there is (sent) a dish on which they put as the Wazīr's portion, a leg (of mutton), and *sherbat* along with bread; and also there is a dish apiece for the Headman and the two Hunza Trangfas on which they put a leg. Then for the cooks there are the fat of the two goats and their necks and skins. And for the musicians there is from ancient times a wooden jar which it is the custom to give to them filled with the oil from the *sherbat*. From that evening's food they set something aside and in the morning, and they bring it with *gurūt tuwūk* from the host's house to the place of assembly.

When the Tham stays thus for a month or two months in Herber every day the people who are exempt from carrying loads bring to the Tham's house two goats and a lump of ghee and bread, which they have made with 15 *chaqs* of grain, and *sherbat*. And every day the Tham gives green grass to the Elders for their horses. To the Wazīr grass is given from five houses and they give the Wazīr one *chuṭi* of grain (for his horse). For the horses each village gives (him?) a rope.

When the hospitalities have come to an end they give a goat and bread (made) of five *chaqs* of grain. This is called *Otaq*. The custom of *Otaq* is as follows: One field has been given to each of them by the Thams and on that they have imposed the *Otaq* tax. Further the exempted man every year gives the Tham as *ilhaw* four animals viz. one he-goat, one ram, one she-goat and one yearling kid. Followers of the second rank and load-carriers give every year three animals viz. one she-goat, one sheep and one yearling kid. Those are the tax (imposed) on load-carriers. Further, each household gives the Tham four (measures of) grain, which they call *salsir jōti* and each household gives a *kichuṭi* of barley, which is called *yashō yūrā*. It is the custom also for every village to give one rope each for as many dogs and horses as there may be.

The Khudā-ābād *ilhaw* is (assigned) to Gushpur Nafīs, and the Nazīmābād *ilhaw* to Shāhāz Khān and the Miagār *ilhaw* is vested

19 *yaṣe yurā* — Wakhi for "horse's barley"; *yaṣ* 'horse' and *yūrā* 'barley'.

21 *Nazimabad* — the older name of this place was *Ḍikke Das*.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burushó AV7

These chambers were once living rooms and bedrooms. 344
It reminded me of a penthouse. While it didn't have an 644
elevator to whiz you upwards in a matter of seconds or the best in modern plumbing, it did have the air, the view, the history and fascination that no penthouse in creation could match.

Back about 400 years ago one of the rulers of Hunza [173 648]
married a daughter of the King of Baltistan who, as a gift to his daughter and her husband, dispatched 500 workmen from his country to Hunza to erect the Baltit Fort that we now know. The rulers of Hunza dwelt in that fort and made it their palace until recent times. The present Mir, too, when he took office after the [712]
death of his father, resided in this palace known as Baltit Fort.

The new palace, in which we were being wined, [122]
dined and entertained, had been completed recently and was taken possession of by the present Mir about 7 years ago. Actually though, the new palace was started by the Mir's grandfather back as far as 1925.

While we were guests at the palace, extensive masonry work was in progress as the Mir was having a broad, low, stone-walled veranda erected. This, I understand, would be used, on completion, as his court, [692 643]
where the citizens of Hunza would come with their problems and where the Mir would preside in judgment.

However, this work in no way interfered with the [342]
normal functions of the household, for, even as the people of Hunza follow the custom of moving upstairs for the summer and downstairs for the winter, so did the Mir.

To me, however, old Baltit Fort was an edifice of distinction, charm and beauty and if I were in the Mir's place, I would never have abandoned it.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

This massive old fortress, for that is what it was, was actually one of the places that had withstood the attacks of invaders for more than 400 years and remained impregnable. It has only once been in enemy hands since the day it was built and that was in 1891, when, after the Battle of Nilt, it was occupied by the British. Records further indicate that the British added no glory to their occupation at the time because of their indiscriminate looting of the treasures found in the palace. But the Mir, whether because of his friendship for the British or because of his desire to tell the truth, claimed that it was not the British who looted it, but the Dogra troops who were under British command.

Here I would like to quote from E. F. Knight's *Where Three Empires Meet:*

"This massive fortress, which has been for hundreds of years the secure stronghold of the robber kings, inviolate until this day, stands boldly out, set in the midst of a sublime landscape. . . . Twigg, Boisragon and myself took up our quarters in the most comfortable chamber we could find, which we soon discovered to have been the apartment of the ladies belonging to the Thum's harem. ("Thum" is Burushaski for ruler, sovereign, king, chief, "Mir". Used especially of the hereditary rulers of the states of Hunza and Nagir.) It was surrounded by a low, broad, wooden divan, on which our bedding was laid. Pillars of carved wood rose from the edge of the divan to the carved beams of the roof, blackened by the smoke of ages. . . . A fire was lit in the open fireplace at one end of the floor, the smoke escaping through a square hole in the roof. Save for the Oriental pattern of the wooden carvings it was just a hall, I imagine, as King Canute might have lived in. . . . We enjoyed a delicious night's rest after our late fatigues.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

CHAPTER 30

Who Are the Hunzans?

I HAVE HEARD the people of Hunza referred to as Hunzans, Hunzukuts, Hunzawals and Hunzas. They prefer to be called Hunzukuts. 101

However, in my writing I am referring to them as Hunzans. I do this strictly as a matter of simplification. I find it easy to say and easy to remember and I also believe it to be the most phonetical of all the terms given.

The Mir claims that the rulers of Hunza were and are direct descendants of Alexander the Great. I could find no proof to either confirm or refute this statement. But it is generally believed that not only the Mir, but the people of Hunza are descendants of Alexander or his soldiers. 643● 173

It has been related by many writers that the Hunzans are not by appearance an Asian people. To that I will subscribe completely. They are definitely, in 144

144 countenance and color, not Indian but European.

If you took the first ten Hunzans that you met anywhere and put them in Europe, no one could doubt that they were Europeans. With the exception of a few clearly and unmistakably Chinese-appearing Hunzans, practically each one would pass as a European. It is understandable that a bit of Mongolian blood got mixed in because Hunza is right smack on the Chinese border.

181 The people of this country are unqualifiedly the
173 most energetic and industrious of all the people I came across in the East, which lends credence to the fact that they are of European origin.

173 Even before I went to Hunza I read carefully Ar-
643 rian's *Life of Alexander the Great*. After seeing Hunza
174 and being impressed by the conviction that the people of Hunza did appear to be Europeans, I came back and made a further search through the *Life of Alexander the Great*.

It is an historical fact that Alexander took unto himself a wife when he was on his Indian campaign. He married Roxana, the daughter of Oxyartes who was king of Bactria. Bactria is in the northern part of Afghanistan—right smack against the Hunzan border.

Alexander had a posthumous son with Roxana. His name was Alexander Aegus.

So the Mir's claim might have sound historical basis. The Hunzans claim to trace their history back about 2,000 years. Well, Alexander married Roxana back in 327 B. C. So you see, the story may have its point.

I'll further state that the Mir himself looked exactly like one would expect a Mediterranean European to look. He might feign a relationship or descendancy from Alexander the Great, but he couldn't feign that Macedonian appearance.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

History also relates most pointedly that Alexander had difficulty with his troops at various points in India where they refused to go any further. Then in Taxila, which is not very far from Rawalpindi on the route to Hunza, he left the sick, disabled and older men. It wouldn't be difficult to imagine that some of the younger wounded men, when they got well, crossed the Himalayas through the Babusar Pass and then wandered up to Gilgit and Hunza or when they were in Bactria, it would have been quite an easy matter—in fact, it was just a matter of walking a few miles through the mountains—to reach the Hunza River.

173
174

It is not in my interest to strengthen the Mir's story or the tales that other writers have established about the relationship of Alexander or his men and the people of Hunza. I am merely citing the above from my actual observations and studies. You can accept it or waive it aside.

One would not have a comprehensive understanding of Hunza and the people of Hunza without a few facts about their comparatively early history.

175
643

One of the most colorful leaders that the people of Hunza have ever had was the present Mir's grandfather—Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan, K.C.I.E. (Knight Commander of the Indian Empire)—who was the Mir of Hunza from 1892 until 1938 when he died on July 23 at the age of 79, having ruled for a total of 46 years. 'Twas a long rule for any king in any country.

In 1934 when he was 75 years of age his wife gave birth to a son who was named Sahib Khan. In January, 1938 the British crown conferred the title of K.C.S.I. (Knight Commander of the Star of India) upon Sir Mohomed.

He was followed by his son, Ghazan Khan who ruled from 1938 to 1945—not quite 8 years. Ghazan Khan

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

175 643 was then succeeded by his son, the present ruler—Mohammed Jamal Khan who has been the ruler of Hunza since 1945.

175 643 669 Here is a quotation from the Mir's grandfather's book in which he tells about the blood-curdling exploits of his brother, Sfdar Ali, whom he succeeded:

"He thereupon had Taighoon, Nematulla and Misiab killed, Sakhawat Shah and Jahandar Shah rolled down a precipice below Ghulkin, their mother put to death and arranged for the murder of Salam Khan in Shimshal."

However, he spared the life of his brother, Nazim Khan and then he wrote to the Maharajah of Kashmir to announce his ascension to the throne in the following descriptive terms:

"By the will of Allah and a decree of fate, my late father and I recently fell out. I took the initiative and settled the matter, and have placed myself on the throne of my ancestors."

This bloodthirsty Mir virtually got away with mass murder and felt that he was cock of the walk and could afford to defy any power.

175 648 From my reading of the Mir's grandfather's autobiography, from studies made from the earlier books written about Hunza and from my observations and discussions on the spot, I have evolved a personal kind of understanding concerning the situation that prevails in Hunza today.

[771] The Mir of Hunza, as well as the other rulers of the principalities in that area, such as Nagir, Punial, Yasin, Baltistan and others, are all Mohammedan and, from what I can gather, they supported or were willing participants in the revolt which tied them together with the central government in Pakistan. This government, bear in mind, is strictly Mohammedan and partition

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

from India was on this religious basis.

However, records clearly indicate that Hunza had for many years enjoyed a pleasant relationship and trade with her Chinese neighbors through the Province of Singkiang. History shows that for ages the caravans moved continually from Kashgar, Urumchi and Yarkand down through Hunza and on to Gilgit, Peshawar, Afghanistan, Persia and further westward.

Hunza in those days used a lot of rice, which came from China. Wheat has practically completely replaced rice.

If this gives rise to the impression that Hunza was not as self-sufficient as you imagined, I am sorry, but I am dealing with facts and not myths . . . unless they are so identified. I don't believe nor does data prove that, while caravans moved from Turkestan through Hunza, there was any great trade or barter between the people of Hunza and Turkestan.

But because of the regular movement of these caravans across Hunza territory, it is easy to comprehend that most of the things the Hunzans would use and require would come from China and there would be a strong Chinese or Turkic influence in the area. Upon checking closely into the records and history, I found that the Chinese district bordering Hunza was also principally Mohammedan in religion as are most of the Turkic peoples. Mir Nazim Khan states clearly in his autobiography that the Mir of Hunza had possession of vast acreages in China along the Yarkand River, on which roamed herds of yaks and other domestic beasts. (It wasn't China then as they had not yet claimed it.)

The Mirs of Hunza have for many years—in fact, from time immemorial—paid tribute to the Chinese government at Kashgar. From the records that I have been able to find, they paid tribute to Kashgar long

As that entire 200 miles from the Chinese border to Nomal is composed chiefly of this type of terrain, unless a caravan had a guarantee of safe conduct, they just couldn't get through. 175 648 [487]

The Mir was the ruler of Hunza and he held full and complete control over his tribesmen. So what could be more natural and understandable than an annual payment of tribute to the Mir for safe conduct? I know for a fact that right up until the time when the Chinese Communists took over the Singkiang District, the Mir still received a share of the cargo carried by the caravans traveling through Hunza. [643] [487]

Therefore it is my conclusion that the ways, the habits and the mode of life of the people of Hunza were patterned more after the Chinese than the Indians. Further, I suspect that they did a lot more trading with the caravans that came through regularly than they ever did at Gilgit. In one instance the caravans came to them and in the other case they had to go down to Gilgit . . . anywhere from 40 to 200 or so miles away, through the tough mountain roads. 175 648 439 [177]

It was in November 1947, when Pakistan seized part of Kashmir from India by an armed revolt. The circumstances that brought about this event are worth recording and I believe you will have greater understanding of the people of Hunza and Pakistan if you know the story. 175 648

The Pakistanis claim that the Province of Kashmir should belong to Pakistan because the Indian government had agreed to allow all the predominantly Moslem districts to secede and become a part of the newly formed country of Pakistan. Therefore, Kashmir which is more than 90 per cent Moslem should be a part of the Mohammedan nation. Eventually, when partition took place, Kashmir was not permitted out of the fold

114 585 "I said it as a joke," replied the Mir. "I had no knowledge that it would be so widely publicized and written and taken as a fact. I did not mean to mislead the writers you mentioned."

"Then it is not true!"

"No," replied the Mir, "I meant it only as a joke!"

●643 115 522 There was no doubt in my mind that the Mir had a keen sense of humor. In fact, through all my talks and discussions with the Mir which were frequent, there was seldom a time when he would pass by an opportunity for a bit of witticism or to laugh and have a bit of fun. He was just about as pleasant a man as could be found anywhere. He was not only a great ruler but he had a sense of humor. It was too bad that the writers referred to took him seriously. Maybe it was one of their bad days.

249 "Do you grow poppies here?" I asked the Mir bluntly and more or less out of the clear blue sky. I put this question to the Mir for a most definite reason.

On a few occasions I saw what I believed to be a field of flowers waving in the distance. But I wasn't sure. Invariably these patches of color were a mile or many miles away. I wondered what they were but I never could get close enough to see them. They were always sighted at great distance from where the road lay.

[123] You might ask why I didn't definitely, once and for all, set out across the field and find out. But remember, when you're in a more or less strange unusual territory, you just don't go off across the fields into someone else's private property.

All told, I doubt if I saw more than half a dozen of these patches of color during the full length of my travels. There might have been many more but I certainly didn't see them and I have an idea that if they

7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

CHAPTER 33

The Mir's Summer Cottage

ALTIT FORT has quite a history. I believe it to be the most historic and most important edifice in all of Hunza. Records that have been handed down would indicate that the fort was about 700 years old and it was erected like a perch, right on a sharp bank of the Hunza River, on what was originally a sharp gigantic precipice.

It may be smaller and perhaps simpler in construction than the larger fort at Baltit, but I thought it was big enough after I walked all around it and went in and out of all its chambers. Then, too, it is much larger now than it was in those days because the present Mir had a new wing erected so that when he holds court and carries out the seed-sowing ceremony, there will be plenty of room for his family, guests and visitors.

I gained the impression that it was a tight little fortress—well built from blocks of rock, expertly

344
644
712 wedged together to form a formidable protection against invaders of their day.

796
241
643 'Tis for the Festival of the Bopfau, which is the Burushaski name given to the barley-seed-sowing festival, that the Mir comes dressed in all his regal finery and robes of state to practice a ritual that has been carried on for hundreds of years by the Mirs of Hunza.

[173] It would appear this ceremony is a carry-over from that performed by the ancient Greeks and the people of Hunza like to emphasize this, as though forging another link in the chain of evidence that would tie them in as descendants of Alexander the Great.

[292] On this occasion the Mir wears a magnificent gown with a wide belt fastened around his waist, in harmony with the gold brocade that bedecks the gown. At his side he carries the ceremonial sword in a carved ivory scabbard. He makes a most imposing, handsome figure with his head crowned with a clerical cap with flowing egret feathers held in place by a large golden pin. The Mir's brother, Ayesh, and the Mir's eldest son, the heir apparent, come similarly attired.

With an assembled crowd watching, the Mir drives a plough pulled by two oxen or a yak down and back along the field and into this furrow he sprinkles seed mixed with gold dust. The ceremony is repeated three times and then the Mir throws handfuls of the seed [789] into the air. Fable has it that if anyone catches a grain of seed and takes it home and mixes it with his own seed, he will be assured of a fine harvest.

The seed-sowing ceremony is not only performed at Altit but in two other Hunzan villages so that the Hunzan farmers can come and catch a seed to insure themselves of plenty for the following year. By doing it in three different locations, it means that no Hunzan farmer will have to walk more than a few miles to partake of the Mir's blessings.

648 ous, the Russians have infiltrated Afghanistan. Therefore, Hunza is now completely hemmed in by what I would call the bamboo, the iron and the stone curtains.

I can't visualize where the Mir has too much to fear from Communist aggression. From what I have seen and learned, the Communists like their spots plush, soft and succulent. None of these conditions exist in Hunza!

The Communists like locations where they can eventually, if not immediately, take out more than they put in. That would never take place in Hunza. Then, too, people who have chosen to live on the north bank of the Hunza River would not be easily shackled or enslaved. Admittedly, the Mir is an absolute monarch but there are no signs of that type of rule in evidence anywhere in Hunza. There's a parallel in England. While England has a queen, a monarch whom the people respect and revere, whom they would follow in life and in death, the monarch would never make demands on her people.

[643]

I do not believe there is a more democratic nation on the face of the globe than Great Britain . . . and that includes the United States or other republics. I believe the same situation holds true in Hunza.

Another point to be considered by possible invaders is . . . What would they gain besides possible armed conflicts with Pakistan and perhaps India?

[353] No, I would suggest that Hunza is comparatively safe from communist aggression and the Mir can afford to have the communist propaganda pictures on the walls of his summer bungalow in Altit as a gesture of friendship.

247 The yard or garden around the bungalow[1] was aglow
177 with flowers of every description and hue imaginable.

1 [ie. of the Mir ANALYST]

7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

They were obviously of American or European origin . . . probably grown from seeds that someone had sent him. Plants like zinnias, snapdragons and asters were readily recognizable.

Then, I was very much surprised to see in front of the bungalow, of all things, a swimming pool . . . and the youth of the district were swimming and enjoying themselves to the fullest possible extent. They were shouting, laughing, splashing and cavorting about just as you would expect boys and girls to do in any swimming pool in America. They displayed the same reckless abandon, glee and happiness that our children do.

At this time I thought to myself that here was another mark of the Mir's bigness. He was allowing the children of the town to make full use of his personal family swimming pool. This was quite different from what most people expect of eastern potentates.

I'm not sure that this little incident impresses you but I assure you I was quite impressed by it. It added to my conviction that the people of Hunza were really free and democratic.

A little way off were our yaks and their guides. "Let's go," I said to Jahangir and Sultan Ali, making straight for the yaks. "The Mir and Cec will be waiting for us, so I guess we'd best be off."

I selected the larger of the two yaks because I'm quite a bit heavier, or almost twice as heavy as Jahangir. I was assisted on to the yak's back and the yak didn't seem to be too happy about it! For the first time since I'd been riding, which wasn't very long, I felt really comfortable. The well-padded broad back of the animal was delightful to sit on and, best of all, he had a western style saddle. I'm always afraid of falling off a horse with those English saddles because I've got nothing to hold on to except the reins and for my kind of

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

whom I recognized as being a typical Hunzan. But the old fellow who caught my attention did so because he was so strange looking. He was slightly stooped, short of stature, looked very old, had a firm yet halting walk and a beard of bright henna red and wore a long brown coat that touched his boots. It didn't require intuition or even a keen mind to recognize that this man was not ordinary in any sense of the word and I remarked to Sultan Ali that this was someone with whom I would like to converse—by means of an interpreter, or course.

We headed the yaks over so we'd be directly in front of the two as they passed by, and Sultan Ali spoke to them. Then he turned to me with a smile and said, "You are quite right, there *is* something most unusual about this man. He says he's 105 years old today—it's his birthday—and he's come to pay his respects to the Mir."

I allowed myself to slide down off the beast's back as I asked Sultan Ali to introduce me to the fine old fellow and we shook hands. He said, "Salaam aleikum!" and I, too, said, "Salaam aleikum!"

I was really very happy and felt privileged to meet a grand old man like this!

I appraised him from head to foot, scrutinized every part of him—up, down, to the right, to the left—and I smiled as best I knew so as not to offend the fine old fellow. He was indeed a patriarchal old man, but he still looked in mighty fine fettle; he'd come from a little farm a few miles away, on foot!

The old man's name was Dado and he lived in Hasanabad. He has one son, two grandsons, three granddaughters and fifteen great-grandchildren. Dado has 10 close friends, all of whom are more than 95 years of age. Membership in that exalted group is hard to come by . . . a most restricted organization.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

Among people—yes, even experienced old-time gardeners and orchardists—there are many who believe that pollination by bees is required in all cases to set a crop of fruit. For many types of fruit and plants, this holds true; pollination by bees or other insects is essential. But in the case of the apricot and many others, wind pollination is the means that nature employs, and actually it is safer and surer than pollination by insects. Rain is also an effective pollinator, contrary to many people's conception and belief. I believe I would be safe in stating that wind pollination is the means of fertilizing more plants than can be claimed for bees and other insects combined. 245

All Hunzans own their own land and house. They pay no rent or taxes. Each citizen does his share of road building, taking care of the water channels and maintenance. The Mir leases his land to various individuals, most of them young people who as yet own no land of their own, or those who have insufficient for their needs. They pay him by means of services rendered and shares of the crops. 423 651 [653] 427 643

During the past few years a bit of money has c... 436 177 464
into Hunza. At the time I was there, there were four expeditions doing mountain and glacier climbing—as well as investigations and research, not in Hunza, but in the vicinity. There were groups from Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland and Germany. In each and every case these expeditions would require bearers, guides, horses and pack animals. These would be recruited from among the Nagirwals and Hunzans and they would be paid in Pakistan rupees. I wish to emphasize that this has only taken place during the past few years. Prior to this period expeditions in this area were extremely rare.

While today money does make its appearance, it is still comparatively scarce. The Mir believes that the coming of money, modernization, and civilization as we know it will only harm his people and he seeks to prevent this, if possible. It is my sincere and humble conviction that the Mir is honest and thinking of his people in his endeavors. 436 177 643

"There is no doubt that the people of Hunza know and enjoy the true thrill of leisure." When I mentioned this to my staff, I was quickly brought to bay by one of my more astute employees who said, "How can that be when they are occupied from dawn till dusk?" 461

I was caught off balance and I had to reflect a moment and when I reflected, the picture was clear to me. Would a man who has never worked understand what is meant by a holiday? Would the average individual who spends his working days sitting at a desk checking figures, making phone calls and chatting with visitors, understand what leisure is? I contend that in order to know the true joy of leisure one must work and the harder one works, the greater is the enjoyment found in utter relaxation.

Can a man know leisure when after his day's work is

533 important part of the proceedings.

533 They have their big feast day just before harvest
535 time and it takes place in the month of Ramadan. At
527 this festival, the musicians set things in motion by starting very early in the morning, and the entire band joins in the sound and the fury. This is followed by dancing and they dance continually, though the same tune is being played over and over and over again in utter monotony. The musicians sit on the floor and make music without pausing, while the dancing goes on in the same way. There are no intermissions or stops.

[643] At this feast the Mir sits on a raised platform in full
[292] regalia. He wears a hat made of Persian lamb, the type of hat you've seen policemen wear in the cold climates in the wintertime.

562 The men invariably dance with their faces turned
[535] towards the Mir. No, the women do not dance, strange to relate. They are merely onlookers. They take no part in any of the social functions or in sport or entertainment. Such Hunzan activities are marked by the distinct absence of women. The Mohammedan religion does not allow women to take part in the social life of the community. This, as far as I can ascertain, has no counterpart in any other religion on earth.

Further, women have no rights or privileges.

After learning of these restrictions by the Mohammedan faith, I felt that there would be no mass migration on the part of the women of the West to Hunza.

535 The harvest dance is very similar to what might be
292 termed a victory dance or a great celebration. The most colorful and interesting dances are the sword dances. The men wear gaily colored costumes that are really very attractive. Their costumes are densely figured and brocaded and the heavy Chinese silks are used as the material. The swords and shields are handmade.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960.AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

hardy, mountaineering people. 526

Some authorities would have us believe that polo as a game had its origin in Tibet, which you can readily see is only a short hop from Hunza. Actually it is right on the border of what was properly old Tibet, but which the Chinese prefer to call Sinkiang. It is also known as Chinese Turkestan. 526 177

The word polo is actually a Tibetan word describing or meaning "root of the willow tree," for it was from the dried stumps of the willow tree that polo balls were originally made. The willow wood, from my intimate knowledge of the tree and the wood, would give quite a bit of bounce if made into a ball and that is exactly what was required.

From the best sources that I am able to dig into and locate, it seems that the modern game of polo as we know it throughout the West, originated in Persia. From there it found its way into Turkey and then it was adopted in India, Tibet, China and Japan. In 1869 the British saw it played in the Turkestan-Hunza regions and began to play it in India, where it became the favorite sport of the British army officers. That was well over 100 years ago. In 1869 it was also introduced into England where it caught on very quickly. Then it made its entrance into the United States in 1876.

Here is a strange fact. While many of the characteristics of the game have changed, the selfsame old willow ball is still used and one of the men still gallops down the center of the polo field and strikes the ball off into play. In the Western world it is the umpire who does this. In Hunza, it's still the Mir or some other distinguished personality. [643]

If any of you have had the opportunity of seeing a polo game in action—that is, Western polo—you might even then get the impression that it is a rough, some-

they play from the time the game starts until it finishes. I don't know who would be more tired . . . the musicians, the polo players or the excited, active, shouting spectators.

I paced off the field and counted 90 good paces long and 40 wide. This would make it approximately 270 x 120 feet. This is quite a bit smaller in size than the modern polo field which is 300 x 200 feet, and would tend to make the Hunzan sport more hazardous and nerve-racking.

Instead of goal posts they use two large white stones at either end.

The game was started into action by the Mir, in this case, who started off at the further end at a gallop. As he reached the center, he threw the ball high into the air and as it came down he clobbered it and the game—or the mad scramble—was on!

There are 6 players on each team and as the ball is pummeled from one place to another, the screams of the spectators and the players are more frenzied than those heard at a baseball game.

There are no rules—except that the team who scores 9 goals first is the winner, and the game doesn't stop until one of the teams has scored 9 goals. They don't have rest periods; they don't change horses or men; there are no penalties and no fouls. So you can just imagine the carryings-on.

If the ball is struck or bounces off the wall and is caught by one of the players, this permits him to ride through the goal posts and deposit the ball and score a goal . . . if the opposition will let him! Any means can be and usually are undertaken to prevent him from reaching the goal to which he is entitled to proceed. If they're bold enough and strong enough, they can even pull him from his mount.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

human being take to a task so assiduously and with so much profound love and feeling. I don't know when it's going to be published or by whom, but I'll certainly make sure to get a set or a copy of the volumes, even if they are printed in German.

The word "Burushaski" is pronounced almost as it is written, except there is a "u" sound in the last syllable rather than an "a" sound. My reaction was to spell the word "uski" and all through the writing of my manuscript that was the way I spelled it, but as I found every other source, with one exception besides myself, spelled it "aski" I had to admit defeat and also use that spelling. The spelling of "uski" was used by the Mir and his grandfather in his book. I still think it sounds like "uski" rather than "aski". Dr. Berger agreed with me that it did sound like "uski" but he felt that for the sake of uniformity, it would be better if I, too, used the "aski".

Nevertheless, though their code of laws remains unwritten, justice does not seem to suffer. The people of Hunza are well acquainted with the laws in vogue. I believe it was Napoleon who said that a nation that has many laws has a lawless people. Perhaps because the Hunzans do not have many laws, they are law-abiding.

Until the partition of Pakistan from India, Hunza was a part of India or, at least, it was definitely included on the map as Indian territory. But there is nothing in Hunza to indicate that they obeyed, owed or acknowledged sovereignty to India.

The Mir was and is the absolute ruler. He supposedly has the power of life and death over all his subjects. I know this power has never been used or abused by the present Mir, who came to the throne in 1945 at the death of his father who ruled but 8 years. Very little is said or recorded about his father's tenure in office.

7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

643 Therefore, I assume that it was an unimportant or
175 uneventful period or, maybe for other reasons, they don't want to say very much about it. However, his grandfather, Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan, has been famed both in fact and fiction and was well educated.
[538] He left an autobiography, and I am the owner of a copy of it, which was given to me by the present Mir.

648 Today Hunza is a part of Pakistan but again, I could
177 see no Pakistani influence in the country, although
167 quite a few of the Hunzan citizens serve in the Pakistani army. But when the Hunzan men and boys return on furlough or after finishing their term of service in the Pakistani army, they take off the uniform and dress in typical Hunzan garb.

643 The Mir is still the absolute monarch of the country.
648 Just what part the Pakistani government takes in his government I do not know, but to all intents and purposes, Hunza is ruled and governed by the Mir.

648 From the most reliable sources that I could contact
642 and glean information from, I learned that Hunza is even today considered an independent state. Hunza and Nagir, its neighbor on the other side of the Hunza River, are said to be the only two remaining independent states in Pakistan, in spite of the fact that, by agreement, the Pakistani government looks after and takes charge of their foreign policy.

436 Apart from the fact that they use the Pakistani ru-
177 pee, and even then only a few of them appear, there seems to be no other Pakistani influence in either Nagir or Hunza.

205 Pakistani postage is also used in Hunza. The mail is
[177] brought in and sorted twice a week. All of the Mir's letters that I have received bear Pakistani airmail postage and they are postmarked "Experimental P.O." I doubt if anyone but the Mir gets any mail, with the

exception of the doctor or visitors. There was a letter from my office awaiting me when I reached the Mir's palace. The Mir told me about it right after our first greeting. He was understanding enough to realize I would be happy to hear from home. 205

I guess many of the things about Hunza wouldn't allow the country to come under the heading of a democracy, but from what I saw of life and living in Hunza, I assure you it is more of a democracy than any other democracy in existence today. 642

Hunza has no policemen, no soldiers, no bureaucracy, no customs officers or immigration officers. They do have the Mir who is the ruler and true head of the state and the Mir appoints the Wazir who is his right hand man and acts as judge. 692 643 [647] [693]

All major squabbles and disputes are handled by the Mir. He holds court regularly and makes the decisions and his word is law and cannot be challenged or contested by anyone. Minor cases are looked after and into and tried by the Wazir.

Hunza does not have a jail. There is no lockup whatsoever. If and when a crime is committed, the criminal or culprit is banished to a place called Shimshal. At Shimshal the criminal or guilty person is not confined or jailed. He just has to live in that rugged place, where living is grim. The altitude is somewhere around 12,000 or 13,000 feet, and eking an existence out of the land there is most difficult and precarious. Actually the form of punishment is a sort of ostracism. 697 681 [133]

Evidently the threat of being sentenced to live in Shimshal is a great deterrent, because few crimes are committed. There have only been two instances in the last ten years where serious crimes have occurred. In one instance it was a youth who had posted indecent signs on trees and other places. He was hailed before 674 [689]

681 which people were exiled and as officers were continually asking me what sort of place it was, I determined to go there and see for myself. The track there
491 was very bad indeed and in two places there were goat hair bridges which were very unpleasant to cross. A ring of wood was used and the traveler was drawn from one bank to the other and if he wore a beard most of the hairs were dragged out on the way. . . .

643 "My father[1] had six wives, three of which were of the
595 ruling classes and three from the Zemindaris. All however, were married to him according to the law and so he left behind no bastards."

276 The Mir told me that of late some of the young boys
177 have taken to smoking cigarettes. This they have picked up and learned from the Hunzan men who have been serving in the Pakistani army. Cigarettes can be pur-
685 chased in the shop in Baltit and a few occasions of
276 petty theft have been encountered. In each case it
[443] seems that they stole in order to get money to buy
[681] cigarettes. These few petty crimes of course did not involve ostracism to Shimshal. It is expected that this condition will continue or even become aggravated as the youth of Hunza become more familiar and acquainted with smoking. Some of the men in Hunza smoke the "hookah" which we know as the water-pipe.

249 Some forms and varieties of tobacco have been tried
123 in Hunza. I promised to send the Mir seeds of the various types of tobacco that we grow in America, such as Virginia, Burley and Quesnel. Perhaps if they can learn to grow tobacco, it will enable the youth to get their hands on some tobacco and satisfy their craving for it without resorting to other ways and means. However, they would have to get paper from somewhere for none is made or improvised in Hunza.

674 It is obvious from what I have seen, that crime and

[1] [ie - the father of S/E Mohomed Nazim Khan - ANALYST]

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

misdemeanors on the scale that we know them in the Western world are practically unknown in Hunza. That being the case, it behooves us to investigate and study family life in Hunza, for juvenile delinquency is becoming a very serious and ever broadening problem in America.

I saw samples of Hunzan justice. Its simplicity made me weep . . . when I recalled our procrastinating, shackled, unwieldy, judicial system. In the Western world civil cases take months and even years to be heard in court before a judge. In Hunza there are so few cases of wrongdoings, or even individual or family problems, that a hearing can be arranged almost immediately.

Petty squabbles or differences between husband and wife or even other disputes can be brought before the Wazir or before the Mir in private. When something more serious is at stake, the grieved party or parties bring their case to the "morning durbar," which is held regularly in the courtyard surrounded by the beautiful gardens at the entrance to the Mir's palace. At the time I was at Baltit many workmen were busily engaged in erecting a large stone enclosure or balcony where the "durbars" will be held, allowing more room for spectators and greater comfort for the counsel.

During the proceedings the Mir sits comfortably ensconced on a square-shaped wooden divan, luxuriantly smothered in rugs, fancy cushions and tapestries. There is none of the strict court procedure or dourness and frigidity known to our Western judiciary system. Here one feels that he is talking to a friend—a fellow citizen—or at least, an acquaintance.

Perhaps we have carried our ideas of justice, freedom and democracy a bit too far. In order that everyone may be afforded justice and fair treatment at the hands

000 of his fellow man and see that it is fairly and impartially carried out, we have made it too complicated. Is there any justifiable reason why it should take months or even years for a civil case to be heard in court? If there are not sufficient judges, I'm sure it would not be difficult to appoint or elect more of them. If there are not enough court rooms and court houses, I feel confident that, with American construction at its high peak of efficiency, it wouldn't take long to correct that.

692 643 Then why isn't it done? I don't know the answer. Do you? The Hunzan system of justice seems to be functioning in a most satisfactory manner. Anyone may petition the Mir and unless he is away, can get an almost immediate hearing. If the Mir is not available or if the problem is not a weighty one, then the Wazir can attend to it.

In truth, justice can be simple!

* * * * *

486 122 In order to get into Hunza you must obtain a permit from the Pakistani authorities in the capital, which is Karachi, but I understand the government is being moved from Karachi to Rawalpindi or a new site close to it. I still think it is more important to have the Mir's invitation, because even though you could get into Hunza, you would be practically helpless without the Mir's assistance and cooperation.

[124] Unless you brought a guide with you and one who could speak English and translate for you, you'd find the going very, very difficult in either Nagir or Hunza. Therefore I would suggest that if you contemplate a visit into this area, you obtain the Mir's invitation or permission first. Then go after the Pakistani government's permit.

648 131 Why the Pakistan government regards Hunza as a strategic region or area is not hard to understand if

123 huge fine quality products that I was told they were. I
241 admit here further that I was in Hunza in July and the
177 later, perhaps the better, varieties were not available or ripe yet. But upon questioning the various people, there was no information given to me that indicated the later maturing kinds were superior to the earlier ones.

So as in vegetables and grains, their fruit could be greatly improved by adopting some of the Western varieties. This could easily be done by having budwood sent to them and they in turn would graft this budwood onto their young stock.

I have made arrangements with the Mir of Hunza and the P.A. at Gilgit to supply them with this required grafting wood at the proper time, and it will be duly sent to them, so that in the future they may have some of the benefit of the West's hybridization and research program. I took along with me a few of the best budding knives that I could procure and I left two with the P.A. at Gilgit and the others with the Mir of Hunza and I explained their use.

245 In talking with the Mir about the planting of new varieties and improved strains, he claimed that his people did graft and seek new varieties and strains, but from the little time I had to inspect things, I did not see any young trees or any great number of grafts that would indicate this being a widely practiced policy. I found nothing resembling a nursery in Hunza or Nagir, but there was a small, unimpressive nursery run by the Pakistani government in Gilgit. Maybe this is the forerunner of bigger and better things to come.

241 There appears to be no central source of seed supply in Hunza. It seems that each farmer saves seeds for next year's crops or barters with his neighbor. In some [643] years, when, because of any one of many conditions

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

that may exist or be created in an agricultural community, no seed is available, the Mir has been known to procure supplies from neighboring states and supply his people with sufficient planting stock.

While through the entire East cow dung and yak dung are used for fuel, in Hunza this is positively not true. The Hunzans are too intelligent to use the mainstay of their lives for fuel. Once it is burned it is gone; but if it is put back into the land, it is there to produce crops for another year. They show their intelligence, if proof of their intelligence is needed, by this one sound principle of self-survival in their means of agriculture.

However, in the more northerly sections of Hunza, closer to the Chinese border, they do use yak dung for fires because of the almost total lack of wood or other types of fuel. They just have to keep themselves warm during the winter.

Here is a list of the vegetables grown in Hunza—potatoes, turnips, carrots, beans, peas, lettuce, pumpkins, tomatoes, melons, watermelons, radishes, onions, cabbage, spinach, cauliflower.

In fruits there are mulberries, apricots, apples, pears, peaches, grapes, walnuts, almonds, a few plums and some cherries.

Grapes are grown fairly extensively because they can plant them against most any wall, as long as they have a bit of soil in which to gain a foothold for their roots. From these grapes they make their Hunzan wine.

They grow a few strawberries, but I could find no currants, gooseberries, raspberries—nor did they know what raspberries were.

The grains grown in Hunza, starting from the most important, are wheat, barley, rye, millet, buckwheat and a small quantity of rice. Some alfalfa is grown as a forage crop.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

643 771 798 [127] Here I will quote from *The Autobiography of Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan,* K.C.I.E. (Mir of Hunza from 1892-1938 and grandfather of the present Mir):

"The people of Hunza were originally idolators and they became Shias when intermarriage with the ruling family of Baltistan was arranged and later, when my great grandfather Shah Salam Khan was on the throne, most of the country became Maulai. In Ganesh and Hinni, there are still a few Shias and two Sunnis. When I became Mir I declared to the people that they could adopt what religion they would, which annoyed my advisers who said that a country with many religions was bound to fall. I said that religion had nothing to do with ruling and have proved myself right in that there has been no religious strife in the country since that time."

788 Maybe the Hunzan farmer mumbles his prayers while he is working, but he seemingly doesn't appear to stop from his efforts on behalf of his farm.

000 From my actual experiences in seeing and viewing religions throughout the world, I am of the opinion that, where religion demands too much of a man's time, his industry suffers and this affects his standard of living. It is a possibility that pious, religious people throughout the world will take exception to this but, nevertheless, I am stating this as my own opinion, based on my findings and observations, and that's all it is. If anyone wants to debate the point with me, I'd be happy to provide the time and the opportunity.

The Hunzans are not fanatics and therefore they can devote more time to their labors than those who spend their time praying and resting, because of religious holidays and observances.

852 304 Being Mohammedans, circumcision is practiced on all male children. Normally this operation is performed

7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

586 The Hunzan law says that in such cases a child must remain with the mother until it is at least 10 years of age. Of course the child can remain with the mother after that period, too, but the father does not have to pay for its keep after that. Divorce is granted to a man only on the grounds of adultery.

Under Hunzan law a woman cannot get a divorce due to any action on the part of her husband. How-
[643] ever, on some occasions where there has been extreme provocation or other clear logical reasons, and the woman brings her justifiable complaint for divorce before the Mir in person, and if the Mir believes her case merits divorce or separation from the man, he will ask or demand of the man that he divorce his wife.

If the wife decides or wants to leave her husband's bed and board of her own free will, the husband does not have to pay for her keep. She will not receive sustenance from him, but he does have to supply her with clothing twice a year.

587 In the event of the death of his wife, the husband is required to wait two months and seven days before he can remarry. However, with the woman, in the event of the death of her husband, she must wait three months and ten days before she can remarry.

586 683 The Mir gave me an example of a divorce case where a certain man had the insidious habit of beating his wife. It seemed he would administer a sound thrashing at the slightest, or even without provocation, until the girl's parents and friends began to fear for her life. In this instance the wife-beater was notified quite clearly and distinctly that it would be in the best interests of all concerned if he gave his wife a divorce.

586 I don't know in what light they regarded this, but now that they knew the man was an avowed wife-beater, if any other woman took the risk of marrying

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza
Nagir

123 smellier than limburger cheese. But so help me, dirt, stink and all, he was a likeable fellow. If only we could have ducked him in the water and got a scrubbing brush and some soap, I probably would have enjoyed his company.

Somewhere near the next village he left us. He was almost in tears at the thought of parting. I had a quarter rupee silver coin in my pocket and gave it to him. He didn't want it but he thanked me at least 200 times for it. I'm sure he would have given me his lousy old shirt if I would have accepted it. As it was, he waved us good-bye with tears in his eyes.

643 628 The Mir of Hunza and the Mir of Nagir are on friendly terms, but I don't for a moment imagine that they are bosom companions. Yet the Mir of Hunza's wife, the Rani, is a Nagirwal. Her uncle is the present [582] Mir of Nagir. In fact, through the centuries, while the people of both these states were at loggerheads with each other, the ruling class intermarried and were always on amicable terms . . . and so it continues.

I will quote here again from *The Autobiography of Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan, K.C.I.E*: "From time to time we have tried to have relations with Nagir that were friendly but they have never lasted, although there have been marriages between the ruling families of both countries. My father and Zafar Khan, Mir of Nagir used occasionally to meet and I remember well the formality of these occasions. Each would come with a large number of followers and would halt on his side of the river. On one occasion Uzar Khan came over to Hunza and there was a great feasting; on another the Mir came and I and some other people from Hunza had to go over to the Nagir bank of the river and remain there as hostages until the Mir returned."

ooo The Hunzans do not only show their superiority over

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7

Hunza

Nagir

The Hunzans do not only show their superiority over the Nagirwals, but over others as well. The P.A. at Gilgit, in a discussion that I had with him, admitted that when the Hunzans moved down the valley to the Gilgit area, they showed their heritage by surpassing anyone else in the district when it came to working their lands and producing their crops. They worked harder, they worked longer, they worked better. They used their experience and intelligence to greater advantage, with the net result that they were soon buying more and better land.

So far only a few of the Hunzans have come down to Gilgit, but the native Gilgiti farmers are already showing their resentment. Obviously they find it difficult to compete with the Hunzans on an equal basis.

I compared the Hunzans with the Scotch people and I think the comparison has many realistic qualities. Both peoples live in a more or less barren, hilly, rocky, rough country. Both peoples have learned the value of being frugal and thrifty. They waste naught and want naught. They are chiefly outdoorsmen. They are strongly nationalistic. Then, too, they are physically independent and have little or no fear of anyone.

When I was talking to the P.A. I called the Hunzans "the Scotsmen of the East" . . . and I trust the Scotsmen won't be offended. In fact, they should be flattered.

Where I think the people of Hunza gain most of their superiority is in leadership. From the little research and reading I have done on the subject, it appears that for many long years the Hunzans have had good capable leaders—really strong men who ruled their people with a firm hand.

In reading the autobiography of the Mir's grandfather, one quickly sees that he was not only a man of action but one of ability, foresight and reason.

Now I did not meet the Mir of Nagir. Although I

157

[167]

181

643

[123]

643 123 wrote to him and asked if I could come and visit him, he did not reply to my letter. No, I'm not annoyed nor am I saying anything unfavorable about the Mir because he didn't answer my letter, but I would have liked to meet him so that I could speak more authoritatively about the many unfavorable statements made about him and his people.

However, I spoke to many people who knew the Mir of Nagir personally. I passed right by his official residence both on the way up and on the trail back. It was pointed out to me and I stopped and looked it over.

643 Whereas the Mir of Hunza is respected—not only in Nagir and Hunza and the entire surrounding country, but in most nations throughout the world—the Mir of Nagir is more or less unknown and does not even have any great amount of social intercourse with his own people.

Whenever I met a Hunzan on the road and spoke to him about the Mir of Hunza and the Mir of Nagir, he would hold himself erect and say through our interpreter something like this, "Our Mir is loved and respected by his people and everyone else. His name and fame have spread throughout the world. The Mir of Nagir, nobody knows of or likes him!" If this was said to me only once or twice, I would pay little or no attention, but a similar vein of thought and expression was portrayed on many occasions.

643 186 I think further that the Mir of Hunza has given a high standard and caliber of leadership to his people. It was apparent wherever I went. He made his people believe and feel that they were good people, that they were equal to the best people of the world and that they were cleaner, stronger, healthier and more intelligent than others, and he was not telling them anything but the truth! The Hunzans hold their heads high.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza
Naqir

Therefore, it is my belief, one of the reasons for the Hunzan high standing throughout the world is due to the excellent quality of leadership that they have enjoyed for many years, and is being continued by the present Mir and his staff and family.

I don't want anyone to run off with the idea that everything I saw about the Hunzans impressed me or that I thought they were exceptional in every way, because that definitely is not true. I did then and I do today admire the people of Hunza for all the splendid qualities that make them outstanding people. Anyone who could live in the harsh, tough, back-breaking terrain of Hunza must be made of stern fiber. Yet they have their foibles and weaknesses as well.

You see there are no immigration rules or laws to stop them from going anywhere in that area . . . at least, there weren't until recently. They could have gone to China, India, Afghanistan, Russia, Pakistan or anywhere else where the pickings might have been easier. But their love of freedom and intelligence that told them they were better off than most people in the world, even though financially poorer, kept them on the mountain slopes that are the banks of the Hunza.

No book on Hunza would be complete to even a small degree, unless some mention was made of the fact that it was not always known as Hunza. In fact, back before the turn of the twentieth century, Hunza was known as Kanjut and the people as the Kanjuts.

From records that I have located, I learned that, when the rulers of Shignam came to Hunza, they called the valley Kanjut. That name remained until the time of the Girkis and they called the country Hunza, because all of the people were united like the arrows in a quiver. In the Burushaski language Hunza means "arrow."

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

I didn't see any water buffalo in Hunza itself, but they are to be found in the Gilgit area and therefore I suspect they are to be found, if not in the principality of Hunza, at least in close proximity. Well, if you find water buffalo, then there is sure to be the Mana or Lali bird. It's a medium sized bird that is very much like our cow bird. He perches right on the back of the water buffalo and works away like a woodpecker, picking out the insects that infest the water buffalo's leathery hide. Thus, he prevents serious injury and disease from spreading from the hide into the flesh of the animal.

This is just another one of the myriad of intricacies that follow in the paths of Mother Nature—how she seeks to balance things for the benefit of all. Here the bird finds a way and means of obtaining food and nourishment and the buffalo keeps healthy and everybody is happy!

Ibex are part and parcel of the Hunza scene. So are the ovis poli or mountain sheep which are actually quite scarce, but are found if one goes high enough into the mountains. The Hunzans call the ibex "markhors." I learned that "markhor" means "eater of snakes," for the ibex, which are actually goats, are known to the people of Hunza for this habit. This also indicates that snakes are found in Hunza. As a matter of fact, every now and then one hears or comes across a snake on the trail. When this happens on a narrow trail high up on a ledge and your horse rears on his hind legs, pawing with his fore . . . 'tis not conducive to a long and boring life!

The Mir of Hunza is quite a hunter. He enjoys shooting and is a true sportsman. My friend, the P.A. at Gilgit, is also an ardent sportsman. Between them, they told me that they had bagged, at one time or another, crows, vultures, golden eagles, geese and ducks, pheasants (two kinds), chicoris (which are their partridge),

682 past 40 years. Never to my knowledge has a stranger
[609] or a visitor ever been harmed or injured.

175 In bygone days the Hunzans were considered good
648 fighting men and were feared by the Chinese, the Afghans and neighboring tribes. It is a fact that they have only been conquered or beaten once in their history and that was by a British force that defeated them at the Battle of Nilt. The British did not seek to conquer the country. It was at the time when the British were the rulers of India. They requested that the Mir of Hunza allow free passage of the mail to Kashgar in China. The Mir at that time, Safdar Ali, felt that he could count upon the aid of the Russians and the Chinese and challenged the British authority. Then the British force went into the field and it required deliberation and courage to assault the high fortress, but it was accomplished by the British and the
[643] Mir fled for his life. The British then appointed his brother as the ruler and departed peacefully. Apart from this, the British did not interfere in the affairs of the Hunzans.

123 *You lose face if you carry anything yourself or do any work.* In all my travels throughout the world, including Hunza, I always did my share of the carrying. I wasn't going to stand by and see one or two men burdened down with my belongings while I walked about empty handed. I will not allow it to be said that I lost face because of this.

I don't want it to be thought that I am better than anyone else nor will I allow them to think that they are better than I. Wherever there was work to be done or burdens to be borne, I always did my share and I intend to keep on doing it.

131 *Hunza in the Himalayas.* Some writers keep referring to Hunza, Gilgit and Rakaposhi as being in the

8;Clark N-5 (1948-1951) 1963
AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza
[P.39-A]

Hunza in the Himalayas

Storied Shangri-La undergoes scrutiny

133
291
292
622
643
344

TERRACED country, *left*, is ruled by the Mir, shown with village chiefs, *above*, at his palace at 8,000 foot altitude. Background peaks exceed 20,000 feet.

8:Clark N-5 (1948-1951) 1963
AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza
[P.40-C]

affairs, its defense, and its single telephone line. Hunza pays no taxes to the Pakistani Government. Instead, they are paid to the Mir, who is absolute ruler of the small border state. The Mir appoints an *arbop*, or village chief, and a *chowkidar*, or local sergeant at arms, for each village. Local disputes are tried by village chiefs. Anyone has the right of appeal to the Mir's court, which consists of the Mir, his hereditary grand vizier, plus the Mir-appointed chiefs of all the villages within walking distance of the palace. However, since the loser usually pays a fine to the Mir's treasury, and the winner traditionally gives the court a present equal to the loser's fine, not many cases are appealed. The Aga Khan (literally "Grandfather King") is spiritual leader of the Ismaili reli-

8:Clark N-5 (1948-1951) 1963
AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

[P. 40-D]

798 gious sect to which all Hunzas belong;
643 the Mir of Hunza is administrator, but not religious deputy, for the Ismailians of the Central Asian District.

114 THE notes about Bohar and his teeth were made after I had worked with the Hunza people for almost three years during two prolonged stays in the small kingdom. I was introduced to this part of Asia as a reconnaissance engineer on General Stilwell's staff, and returned twice be-
114 tween 1948 and 1951. My primary
123 purpose as Director of the Central Asiatic Research Foundation was to discover what resources were available to the Hunzas, and to teach them to use these to their own best advantage. From the start of my second visit I operated a general dispensary with

[Text continues on p. 41-A]

262 meals. By September, wheat replaces the barley, and fresh grapes, carrots, and some melons are available. The [273] grapes are either eaten fresh or made into wine; the supply of both is always exhausted by spring.

796 585 Tumushuling, the great winter celebration in mid-December, is a sort of delayed thanksgiving feast. December 19, the day before the Tumushuling celebration, is the day in Hunza on which all weddings are celebrated. Each bridegroom. accompanied by several of his friends, goes to the home of his betrothed and sits outside her door. which is kept partially open. Periodically, he hands in gifts of cloth, food, or perhaps even a dish or pan [431] from Pakistan. Meanwhile, his friends give chapatties with butter, a real luxury, to any wayfarers who may pass by—a custom that encourages some travelers to take circuitous routes in order to encounter the well-to-do [492] marriages. By evening the gifts are exhausted and the groom returns home. leading his veiled bride, who either walks or is mounted on a donkey. Tumushuling thus is a group wedding celebration as well as a harvest festival. [643] [431] The Mir gives a small gift, usually a piece of cloth, to every bridegroom who comes to claim it.

585 583 As in most Asian cultures, Hunza marriage is civil rather than sacramental. The ceremony is really a not-too-symbolic purchase of the bride.

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burusho AV7

for centuries persistent rivals, always at war with each other, but always ready to unite against a common invader, even when that invader had been called in by the one State in order to assist it in coercing the other.

The State of Hunza was the most important of the two, from the fact that its possession of the passes leading to the Pamirs, and to the valley of the Yarkand river, gave it the opportunity, in the picturesque Persian phrase, of "striking the road," and looting the caravans on their way between Turkestan and India. The rulers of Hunza availed themselves of this commanding position freely; their name was a terror to the merchant and to the gentle Kirghiz, and their success was such that certain roads were entirely abandoned by traders; tracts of country north of the passes were completely depopulated, and Hunza was the centre of the slave trade, the place to which the merchants of Badakshan regularly came to replenish their stocks. The rulers of Hunza were rich compared to those of Nagar, and secure in the fastnesses of their mountains they snapped their fingers at China and Kashmir, and with fine impartiality plundered caravans to the north and kidnapped slaves to the south. But brigands by profession as the people were, they appear to have acted always on the orders of their chief, and the admirable cultivation of their ground, the immense and persistent labour spent on their irrigation channels, and on the retaining walls of their terraced fields, showed that they were worthy of better things. The country itself is some hundred miles in length: from Chalt to Hunza, a distance of about twenty-five miles

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burusho AV 7

of Nagar, and the name is supposed to be the corruption of the Chinese word Tung, which forms part of many Chinese titles. The Thum was an absolute ruler, who killed or sold his subjects into slavery as it pleased him; but that the rule, though despotic, must have been tempered by common-sense is shown by the fact that the office of wazir, or minister, has gone down in unbroken succession from father to son for seven generations.

Safdar Ali, the Thum at the time of my visit, had murdered his father, Ghazan Khan, three years previously, and his character caused me some anxiety. He had, it is true, as had the Nagar chief, written to Government, and asked that a mission should be sent to him, but he bore an ill name for treachery, cruelty, and weakness. In common with most of his subjects he belonged to the Maulai sect, the followers of which, though calling themselves Shiahs, were a bye-word on the frontier for their shameless violation of all the leading Mahomedan doctrines. The men drank wine freely; their morals were of the loosest; a man considered himself honoured if his wife attracted the Thum's attentions, and hospitality enjoined that he should offer her to his guest. Withal, they were cheery, pleasant people to deal with, slight, wiry, and very active, first-rate mountaineers, and of untiring energy, a great contrast to the Shins of Gilgit. With none of the bloodthirstiness of the Pathan they yet had a great reputation for bravery, and had more than once invaded and severely handled their Nagar neighbours, who were said never to have carried the war into their country.

The cultivation in Hunza is very limited; the

4z Durani G-3 (1888-92) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burusho AV7
●643
291
142

RAJA UZR KHAN OF NAGAR.

[facing p. 142]

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burushe AV 7

644 three doors are placed in the right angle turn of a
342 very narrow passage which only one man can use at a time, and the doorways are so low that a tall man has to bend almost double to pass through them. The object is to prevent a rush, and to make it impossible for a man to use his weapons as he passes through the last doorway. Similarly the ascent to the flat-topped roof of a man's house is jealously guarded, and he who considers himself in any danger never sleeps twice in the same part of his room, for the skylight gives an enemy a convenient point of vantage from which to shoot.

643 We found the Thum in a typical square room,
159 with an open skylight, and a sunk hearth in the floor, seated by a balconied window, from which there was an extensive view over his country. His beard was carefully dyed, and it was difficult to guess his age, but he was not an old man; drink and debauchery had reduced him to his present state, and paralysed him
644 from the waist down. We did not stop long, as the visit was merely one of ceremony, and the audience room was full of people, before whom business could not be discussed. Our uniforms were a source of much interest to our hosts, and of considerable discomfort to ourselves. Frock coats and spiked helmets, high boots and spurs, sword and sabretache, are not quite the thing for the grand staircases of the
[539] country. Later in the day Uzr Khan paid me a visit,
644 and we had to sit through an interminable dance pro-
535 gramme, which, as the orchestra consisted of six pairs of kettle-drums, six large drums beaten at both ends, and three pipes, was simply deafening. The dances were all very much the same—six or eight men

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burusho AV7

644 been melted down to find metal for it. The Thum of the day was so pleased at possessing it that he at once killed the maker, lest he should go to Nagar and make one there. The Wazir had instructions from his King to go on firing till further orders, but after twenty-three guns we thought they had had enough, and I sent a request that they would stop and let us proceed. We were met at the gate of the fort by Wazir Dadu, rather a pleasant-looking man of about forty-five.

[361] The approach to the fort through the village was much the same as at Nagar, but the road was broader. 643 As we passed over the great water channel which fertilises the Hunza oasis, and which at its débouchere from the parent ravine runs through a low tunnel, an ominous whisper informed me that this was the scene of the old Thum's murder by his rascally son, assisted by his present Wazir, Dadu. The old man was fired at from the roof of a house as he rode in from hawking. The first discharge was not fatal, and the men with the Thum begged him to take refuge for a moment in the irrigation tunnel while they raised help, which, by all accounts, was within an ace of coming, but the old Chief refused, saying, "It was no use; he had lived long enough, and his day was 661 come." His Wazir, Humayum, Dadu's elder brother, was away in Gujhal at the time, and the new Chief sent him an urgent letter, stamped with his father's seal, calling him to return at once to Hunza. But though the letter had been prepared beforehand, was sealed before the warmth was out of the old Chief's body, and was despatched by a trusted messenger, the plot failed. Warned by some friend, or distrusting

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burusho AV 7

the wording of the letter, Humayum turned his horse's head, and rode for his life. He reached the passes in safety, and going by Wakhan, entered Chitral, and claimed the hospitality of the Mehtar. This was gladly accorded him, for he was a valuable man in case of trouble with Hunza, and he remained in Chitral, an honoured guest, until his turn came later.

Once inside the fort we had only two sets of stairs to ascend, and they were not so primitive as in Nagar, though they were equally defensible. We were received by the Thum at the top, and seated on an open platform overlooking the village and valley. Safdar Ali Khan was a delicate-looking young man of about twenty-two, with shifty Mongolian eyes, and a chestnut-coloured small peaked beard and moustache. The face was a delicate oval in shape, and weak in expression. He was looking decidedly ill, and considerably pulled down by fever.

The surroundings were richer than in Nagar. A guard of fifteen men armed with breechloaders, English and Russian, surrounded the Chief; the courtiers were better dressed, and good Central Asian carpets were spread on the ground. The Thum himself was handsomely dressed in silks, and wore a beautiful velvet belt of Chinese workmanship, with clasps and bosses of gold studded with torquoise and coral. We stayed but a short time, paying a purely ceremonial visit. On my return to camp I found that the four men of my guard had been prevented from coming upstairs, and that an attempt had been made at stopping my orderlies also. I accordingly at once sent up to the Wazir, and protested against this, saying that I con-

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burusho AV7
1

funked himself into a state of great nervousness and a sort of nettle-rash five minutes after he had taken his first dose, which should not have taken effect for an hour. This sounded bad, for a rank coward is a dangerous man to deal with.

The views from our little camp by the polo ground were superb, especially in the afternoons; the great sugar-loaf peak of Dirran, just opposite, seemed to float and melt in the pale blue sky, and Rakapushi was glorious, with great dashes of sunlight at his base, and bands of clouds resting high up, the great peaks standing out above.

And now came the important interviews at which business had to be discussed. The first one was quite satisfactory. I found the Thum in a small open room or court leading into the private apartments, and we sat down to discuss business. It was obvious that the Wazir was the important man, but also that the Thum, cowardly, shifty, and with a ridiculous idea of his own importance, must be reckoned with very carefully. Everything passed off well, and the Government conditions were readily assented to, the most important one at the moment being the promise of a free passage to Younghusband, who was to come to Gilgit in November from the Pamirs. Wazir Dadu amused us very much when the question of raiding was raised. He made no attempt at denying that this was the custom of the country, and explained it by saying that Hunza was a poor state, and that necessarily its people looted. The evident enjoyment with which he referred to former exploits, and the expressive grin which accompanied his explanations,

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burusho AV7

a *volte-face* on the part of the Chief, who was probably now cursing those who had counselled him to violence, and in whose fickle and unstable mind the advantages of being well with us were now in the ascendant. My reply to his letter was very much to the point, and the result was a complete climb-down on the part of the Thum, abject apologies and profuse protestations of loyalty to the engagements lately taken. I attached the proper value to his vows, but left the country feeling that, at all events for that year, there would be no further trouble, and that Younghusband's safe passage was assured.

We all liked what we saw of the Hunza people; they were cheery and pleasant and civil as we passed through their villages. The leaders were scoundrels. Dadu and his son had fired the first shots at the old Thum, while the contemptible young parricide who succeeded cowered in a room below them. The moment the old man was dead Safdar Ali entered the fort, seized the wife of one of his father's chief adherents, and murdered his three younger brothers. Two were strangled and cut to pieces, the third was taken to the edge of the cliff, on which the fort stands, and hurled over. He was a mere boy, and only asked that he might be thrown into the water, not on to the rocks; his prayers were unheeded. Safdar Ali's description of the circumstances attending his accession was contained in a letter to Government which ran somewhat as follows: "By the will of God my father and I fell out; he died suddenly, and I have ascended the throne." The old Thum, with all his villainy, had been a man, and I found traces, even during my short visit to Hunza, of deep discontent

~~Biddulph G-3 (1873-1878) 1880 AUS Afghanistan AU1~~
4
AV3 Dard
Burusho AV7

proud of the independence they have always maintained, and they probably present the spectacle of a race living under almost the same conditions now as their forefathers did fourteen centuries ago. The rulers are called *Thum*, and their families are descended from twin brothers, Moghlot and Girkis, who lived about the end of the fifteenth century. General Cunningham makes the somewhat natural mistake of confounding Girkis with Kirghiz, and suggests that the former inhabitants of Hunza must have been Dards (?), who have since been displaced by the nomads of the Pamir. From this he goes on to argue that the rulers of Shigar must also be of Kirghiz blood; and following the same line of argument he states that the Astor district must once have belonged to the Tibetan race, because the ruling family are Makpons. He also mentions the Gilgitis as a race of Dardo-Tibetans, for which assumption there is no adequate foundation.[1]

I have been told by a Nepaulese gentleman that *Thum* is a Chinese title, meaning Governor, and that it is used in a reduplicated form *Thum Thum*, to signify a Governor General.[2] Its existence in these countries, where its origin has been completely lost sight of, is curious and must be extremely ancient.

The rulers of Nager, who are descended from the first-named of the two brothers, are called Moghloté, the present Thum being Jaffer Zahid Khan. Though the smaller of the two states, Nager has the larger population, owing to the greater amount of cultivable ground which it contains. The population is about 10,000 souls. The land where cultivable is extremely fertile and bears exceptionably heavy crops, and the Nager streams are rich in gold. The country is especially famous for its apricots, which are dried and exported to the Punjab in considerable quantities. Nearly opposite Hunza, the Myetsil River, a considerable stream, joins the main river from the south-west. The fort of Nager and the Thum's house are on the southern side of this stream, about 3 miles from the junction, at an elevation of 8,000 feet above the sea. Both sides of this valley belong to Nager, and it forms the eastern boundary of the state. At the head of it is the difficult and dangerous road over the Hispar Pass into the Shigar Valley, which is never used except in cases of necessity. When Cashmere authority was temporarily

[1] Cunningham's *Ladakh*, pages 27, 38, 58, 295.

[2] It is perhaps a corruption of the word Tung, which appears in many titles. The Chinese Governor of Kashgharia is called Tsung Tung, and the officer who commands the troops is styled Tung-lung.

[See I: Cunningham, AJ4 West Tibetan File -- Analyst]